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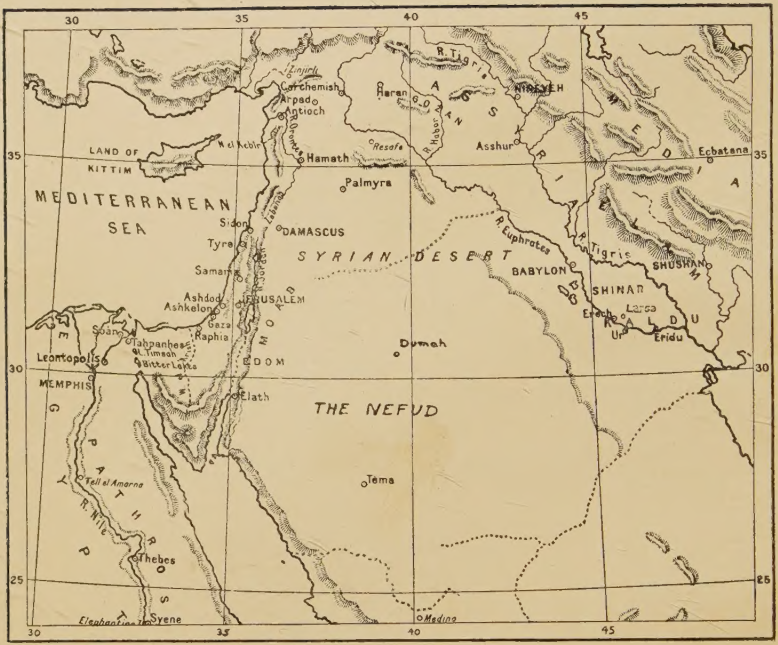
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The Book of Isaiah.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH
CHAPTERS [I–XXXIX]
IN THE LIGHT OF THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS

BY

CHARLES BOUTFLOWER, ~~M.A.~~

Late Vicar of Terling, Essex, and Author of
In and Around the Book of Daniel

> "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
> And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
> And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
> When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee."
>
> BYRON.

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PREFACE

THE object of the writer of this book is to throw all possible light on the first part of the Book of Isaiah. Having been long and deeply interested in Biblical Archæology, he has endeavoured to show how bright a light, chiefly from Assyrian sources, is now cast on this part of Holy Scripture. He strongly feels that in these wonderful days of excavation, decipherment, and research, any historical facts, which add to our knowledge and understanding of the Inspired Writings, ought to be made widely known.

Portions of some of the chapters have already appeared in *The Journal of Theological Studies* and in *The Churchman*. They are here reprinted by kind permission of the editors of those periodicals.

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NOTE

ON THE DATE OF THE ACCESSION OF HEZEKIAH

IN order to obtain a firm basis for the chronology of the Isaianic times our first object must be to ascertain the date of the accession of Hezekiah, and we shall find that in doing this we meet with a most satisfactory explanation of certain Biblical dates which are at variance with those found in the Assyrian records.[1]

Three dates for Hezekiah's accession have been put forward by scholars, viz. 714, 727, and 721. The first of these is based on 2 Kings xviii. 13. It allows us to look on the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 as happening in the 14th year of Hezekiah; but it is at variance with 2 Kings xviii. 10, where Samaria, which according to the Assyrian reckoning fell in 722, is stated to have fallen in the 6th year of Hezekiah. It would also require us to put the accession of Ahaz, who, according to 2 Kings xvi. 2, reigned sixteen years, in 730; whereas according to the monuments Tiglathpileser responded to the appeal of Ahaz for help as early as 734.

The second date, viz. 727, is based on 2 Kings xviii. 10, which states that the fall of Samaria, which according to the monuments happened in 722, took place in the 6th year of Hezekiah. This date requires us to put the accession of Ahaz in 743, whereas according to the monuments Azariah-Uzziah was still on the throne as late as 739.

The third date, viz. 721, is at variance with both 2 Kings xviii. 10 and 2 Kings xviii. 13. For if Hezekiah mounted the throne in 721, then the fall of Samaria did not happen in his 6th year, nor did the invasion of Sennacherib happen in his 14th year. And yet in spite of this double breakdown 721 is probably the right date for Hezekiah's accession. This will be seen if we first enquire into the origin of the synchronisms of

---

[1] The chronological reliability of these records is explained in Chapter II.

2 Kings xviii. 9, 10. How did the Biblical editor who affixed those synchronisms, arrive at the conclusion that Samaria, which was captured by the Assyrians in 722, fell in the 6th year of Hezekiah? It has been suggested with great probability that he knew the date of the fall of Samaria, viz. 722, and also the date of the fall of Jerusalem, viz. 587, as well as the lengths of the reigns of the kings of Judah from Hezekiah to Zedekiah inclusive. What he did not know was the date of Hezekiah's accession. To obtain this he reckoned backwards thus:

Fall of Jerusalem	587 B.C.	
Zedekiah	11 years.	
Jehoiachin	0 ,,	3 months.
Jehoiakim	11 ,,	
Jehoahaz	0 ,,	3 months.
Josiah	31 ,,	
Amon	2 ,,	
Manasseh	55 ,,	
Hezekiah	29 ,,	
Total	726½ years	

The above reckoning led him to look on 727 as the date of Hezekiah's accession. Hence he regarded the fall of Samaria in 722 as happening in the 6th year of Hezekiah. It escaped him, however, that in making the above calculation he was failing to make allowance for double reckonings, by which, in reckoning the lengths of the different reigns, the last year of one king was counted in again as the first year of his successor. If this allowance be made, it will reduce the total from 726½ to 720½, and will lead us to the conclusion that Hezekiah came to the throne, not in 727, but in 721. A remarkable confirmation of this latter date is obtainable from Isa. xiv. 29, where the Burden upon Philistia is stated to have been uttered in the death-year of Ahaz, and hence a little before the accession of Hezekiah. In the previous year, 722, the shortlived dynasty of Tiglathpileser, under which Philistia had suffered during the invasion of 734, had come to an end with the death of his son, Shalmaneser. But the prophet warns her not to rejoice over the change of dynasty, but rather to expect worse times under the Sargonids, a prophecy very amply fulfilled by the campaigns of 720, 711, and 701, in which all the Philistine royal cities, viz. first Gaza, then Ashdod, and lastly Ashkelon and Ekron, suffered in turn.

With regard to the placing Sennacherib's invasion in the

14th year of Hezekiah, the painstaking, well-meaning editor, who constructed the synchronisms referred to above, would rightly conclude from a comparison of 2 Kings xviii. 2, where Hezekiah is stated to have reigned 29 years with 2 Kings xx. 6, where the promise is given of 15 added years, that Hezekiah's illness happened in his 14th year. Then from the fact that in the promise of life to be prolonged there was also included a promise of the deliverance of Jerusalem out of the hand of the king of Assyria he might very easily jump to the conclusion that the invasion of Judah and the siege of Jerusalem must have happened in the year of Hezekiah's illness, *i.e.* in his 14th year. He would thus be led to affix that date to the narrative of 2 Kings xviii. 13 f.

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TABLE I

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ISAIANIC TIMES OBTAINED FROM THE ASSYRIAN RECORDS, WITH SCRIPTURE REFERENCES AFFIXED

B.C.

745 Tiglathpileser III king of Assyria. Expedition to Babylonia.

741 Fall of Arpad. Isa. x. 9.

738 *Az-ri-ia-u* (Azariah-Uzziah) on the throne of Judah. Conquest of Hamath and capture of Cullani (Calno, Calneh). Isa. x. 9, Amos vi. 2. Rezin of Damascus and Menahem of Samaria tributary. 2 Kings xv. 19, 20.

734 Expedition to Philistia. Isa. xiv. 29.

733–732 N. Israel led captive. Isa. ix. 1. Damascus captured and Rezin slain. 2 Kings xvi. 9. Isa. xvii. 1. Ia-u-kha-zi (Jehoa-haz-Ahaz) of Judah an Assyrian tributary. 2 Kings xvi. 10.

729 Tiglathpileser king of Babylon. Isa. xiv. 4.

727 Shalmaneser V king of Assyria. 2 Kings xvii. 3.

722 Sargon II king of Assyria. Isa. xx. 1. Fall of Samaria. 2 Kings xvii. 6.

721–710 Merodachbaladan king of Babylon.

720 Rebellion in Hamath, Arpad, and Samaria. Isa. xxxvi. 19. Assyrian troops overrun Judah. Isa. x. 28–30.

711 Fall of Ashdod. Isa. xx. 1. Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab speaking sedition against Assyria.

705 Sennacherib king of Assyria.

704 Merodachbaladan king of Babylon a second time for 6 or 9 months.

701 Sennacherib invades Palestine. Isa. xxxvi. 1.

690 Arabian expedition of Sennacherib. Isa. xxi. 11–17.

689 Sennacherib destroys Babylon. Isa. xiv. 23 and xxi. 9.

681 Esarhaddon king of Assyria. Isa. xxxvii. 38.

612 Fall of Nineveh. Isa. xxi. 2.

TABLE II

ADDITIONAL ISAIANIC DATES

B.C.	
736	Accession of Jotham. “The year that king Uzziah died” and in which Isaiah was called to the prophetic office.
735	Accession of Ahaz, and the year of his appeal to Assyria for help.
720	Accession of Hezekiah. “The year that king Ahaz died,” in which Isaiah uttered his Burden upon Philistia. Isa. xiv. 28.
714	“The year that the Tartan came unto Ashdod.” Isa. xx. 1.
707	Embassy from Merodachbaladan in Hezekiah’s 14th year. 2 Kings xx. 12, and Isa. xxxix. 1.
692	Death of Hezekiah and accession of Manasseh.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

(Chapters I—XXXIX)

IN THE LIGHT OF THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD IN ISAIAH'S DAY

> "Leviathan the swift serpent, and leviathan the crooked serpent, and the dragon that is in the sea."—ISA. xxvii. 1.

AS the main object of this book is to throw the light of history on the earlier part of the Book of Isaiah, its opening chapter may very properly be devoted to a general review of the state of things in the world of Western Asia in the days of that prophet, *i.e.* during the latter half of the eighth century B.C. and the first quarter of the following century.

In chap. xxvii. 1, Isaiah uses the three symbols quoted above to describe the three great world-powers of his day. What powers do these symbols severally denote? In Isa. li. 9, "the dragon," Heb. *tannin*, is used as a parallel to *Rahab*, "the Proud." "O arm of the Lord," cries the prophet, "art not thou it that cut Rahab in pieces, that pierced the dragon?" the following context showing that Rahab is there a name for Egypt, a name which appears also in chap. xxx. 7, "For Egypt helpeth in vain and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still." "The dragon," then, is a name for Egypt. But what about the name "leviathan," which along with the term "dragons" is used in Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14 to describe the Egyptian power? Since in Job xli. 1 "leviathan" is the name given to the crocodile, may it not also be used in the present instance to describe the great world-power seated on the banks of the Nile?

The term "leviathan," whatever be its derivation, is an elastic term, not confined to the crocodile, but denoting any great sea monster. Thus in Ps. civ. 26 it is used of the whale. Speaking of "the sea great and wide," the Psalmist writes, "There go the ships; and there is that leviathan, whom thou hast formed to take his pastime therein."

As, therefore, we cannot restrict the meaning of the term "leviathan" to the crocodile, so in Isa. xxvii. 1 the epithet "Leviathan" does not necessarily denote Egypt. Indeed, that chapter shows plainly enough that Egypt is not the only power which rises up before the prophet's mind. There is another power which stands before Egypt, just as in verse 12 "the flood of the River," *i.e.* the Euphrates, is mentioned before "the brook of Egypt," and in the following verse "the land of Assyria" before "the land of Egypt." For, as Cheyne well puts it, "the point of view in these two verses is that of Isaiah, in whose time Assyria and Egypt were Israel's principal foes."[1] While, then, in "the Dragon" we see Egypt, it seems more reasonable to look upon the epithet "Leviathan" as a symbol for Assyria. But here, again, we can see no reason why *two* epithets, viz. "Leviathan the Swift Serpent" and "Leviathan the Crooked Serpent," should be bestowed upon Assyria. Consider, then, that if Egypt be "the Dragon that is in the Sea," *i.e.* the Nile, and Assyria as the first great world-power, "the Swift Serpent"—where the adjective "swift" points to her own rapid Tigris, the fit symbol of her energetic, prompt action—then was there in Isaiah's day a *third* world-power and one deserving of the *second* place: a power akin to Assyria as being the stock from which Assyria sprang, and thus a second "Leviathan"; also, like Assyria, symbolised by the river on which it was seated, viz. "Leviathan the Crooked Serpent," to wit Babylon on her winding Euphrates.[2] For just as the description of the Egyptian "Dragon" as being "in the Sea," *i.e.* the Nile, seems to point to the territorial vastness of the Egypto-Ethiopian power, stretching as it did in Isaiah's day far up her great river to the remotest regions of distant Ethiopia; and just as "the Swift Serpent," the Tigris, or "arrow-river" of the Persians, flowing at a greater rate than the Euphrates and pouring down a greater volume of water, indicated the mighty power of Assyria in motion, described by the prophet in chap. viii. 7 as "the waters of the River, strong and many"; so, no less suitably, does "Leviathan the Crooked Serpent" describe the Babylonian power, shifting first this way and then that, trusting rather to secret, tortuous diplomacy, than to prompt open action; sending an embassy to Judah's king, professedly "to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land" when the shadow went back ten steps on the dial of Ahaz, but really to form some estimate of the resources of Hezekiah and to enter into a secret alliance with him against Assyria. To this argument it only needs to be added that just as the term "serpent" is applied here to both Assyria and Babylon, so in Isa. xiv. 29, in a prophecy referring to the time when both those powers were united under one crown in the closing years of the short-lived dynasty of Tiglathpileser III, we find the same term used to express the united Assyro-Babylonian power. The passage in question runs thus: "Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee, because the rod that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent."

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[1] *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, vol. i, p. 159.

[2] The singular windings of the Euphrates in the neighbourhood of Babylon are ascribed by Herodotus to Nitocris, bk. i, 185.

Having thus explained the symbolic description, and established the identity of these three great world-powers, Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, it may be well to add that there were other great powers in Isaiah's day, such as Elam to the east of Babylonia and Ararat to the north of Assyria. The wars with Elam occupy a very large place in the inscriptions of Sennacherib, and the kingdom of Ararat was particularly powerful at the beginning of the Isaianic era, and though it received a check at the hands of Tiglathpileser, continued to give great trouble and was a source of no little anxiety to Assyria in the reign of Sargon. But as neither of these powers had anything to do with Israel, they are mentioned only incidentally in Isaiah's Book; Elam, as a power destined presently to help Media in putting down Assyria[1]; Ararat, as affording a refuge to the murderers of Sennacherib.[2]

As regards the three world-powers, Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, we note that Assyria herself suffered a partial eclipse during the second quarter of the eighth century B.C. On the north she was much threatened by the kingdom of Ararat, and her southern border was also receding. Yet we find her still able to make expeditions into Syria north of Palestine.[3] It was this partial eclipse which allowed of the expansion of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam II, and a little later of the kingdom of Judah under Uzziah. But just when things looked darkest for her, when she was so weakened as to be scarcely able to undertake any military expeditions, her sun burst forth with surpassing splendour, thus ushering in a period during which she was greater than ever before, the very scourge of the nations round her and aiming at universal sovereignty. "With the advent of Tiglathpileser III (746–728)," [1] writes Olmstead, "we enter upon the last period of Assyrian history. Our sources rapidly become more and more abundant and the importance of the events chronicled increases in the same ratio. It is this period of little over a century which justifies a detailed history of Assyria." [2] As regards the earlier part of the Book of Isaiah it is the first half of this interesting period, including the reigns of Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib, which calls for our close attention. We may begin with the siege of Arpad in Northern Syria, 742–740 B.C., and then go forward to the conquest of Hamath in 738. In this last year tribute was paid to Tiglathpileser by Menahem of Israel, as recorded in the Assyrian annals and in 2 Kings xv. 19, where this monarch receives his Babylonian throne-name, Pul. Menahem was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who reigned only two years and was slain by the usurper Pekah.[3] Pekah mounted the throne of Israel in the death year of Uzziah king of Judah, the same year in which Isaiah received his call to the prophetic office.[4] Menahem, Pekah, and Uzziah, as well as Uzziah's grandson Ahaz, are all mentioned in the inscriptions of Tiglathpileser, but no mention is made of Uzziah's son and successor Jotham. According to 2 Kings xvi. 2 this king reigned sixteen years, doubtless for the greater part of the time along with his father.[5] His sole reign must have been very short, for his son Ahaz was on the throne of Judah not later than 735 B.C., as appears from the fact that it was in response to the appeal of Ahaz that Tiglathpileser in the following year invaded Syria and Palestine and carried captive Northern Israel.[6] This invasion lasted from 734 to 732 B.C. In 734 the Assyrians overran Philistia, and in 732 they captured Damascus after a three years' siege. Ten years later Samaria was also captured after a siege of equal length, only to break out into rebellion along with Hamath and Arpad two years later.

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[1] Isa. xxi. 2.

[2] Isa. xxxvii. 38.

[3] According to the Assyrian Eponym List, expeditions were made against Ararat in 781, 780, 779, 778, 776, 774 B.C., to the Cedar Country in 775, to Damascus in 773, to Hadrach on the Orontes (Zech. ix. 1) in 772, 765, 755, and to Arpad in 754.

Let it be noted how closely the above events are connected with the earlier chapters of the Book of Isaiah. In chaps. x. 9, xxxvi. 19, and xxxvii. 13 we find references to the conquest of Hamath and Arpad: in xiv. 29 to the invasion of Philistia: and in ix. 1 to the captivity of Northern Israel. In viii. 4 the prophet predicts the speedy spoiling of both Damascus and Samaria by the Assyrians. In xvii. 1 he predicts that Damascus will become "a ruinous heap," and in xxviii. 1–3 that Samaria "the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim" will be "trodden under foot." But perhaps that which most strikes us in these historic contacts is the prophecy of the downfall of the great usurper Tiglathpileser himself, contained in the Burden of Babylon, chap. xiii. 1–xiv. 23. Tiglathpileser was the first Assyrian monarch since the days of Tukulti-Urta I, five centuries before, who had succeeded in uniting Babylon and Assyria under one crown. This union lasted but for a few brief years, 729–722. With the death of his son Shalmaneser in the latter year Babylon regained her liberty, and passed again into the hands of the Chaldeans for a period of twelve years. Nevertheless in the usurper Sargon, who next ascended the throne, Assyria found one of her ablest kings. The name Sargon will for ever testify to the trustworthiness of the Book of Isaiah, seeing that for long centuries the very existence of this king was known only from Isa. xx. 1. Strangely enough the splendid palace of Sargon in the mound of Khorsabad was destined to be the first Assyrian palace laid bare before the eyes of us moderns. The fall of Samaria was the first event in the reign of Sargon. Two years later, when a rebellion broke out in Samaria, the land of Israel was again overrun by the armies of Assyria. It was probably at this time that the hostile demonstration against Judah, so strikingly depicted in chap. x. 28–32, took place. The troubles at Ashdod, referred to in chap. xx, lasted for three years, 713–711. In the next two years, 710–709, Sargon conducted a campaign against Merodachbaladan the Chaldean king of Babylon. From 709 down to the end of the reign of Sargon Babylon was in the hands of the Assyrians. During the reign of Sennacherib it often changed hands down to the time of its destruction by that monarch in 689 B.C. Sargon, 722–705, was the founder of the last dynasty of Assyrian kings. He was followed by his son Sennacherib, 705–681, his grandson Esarhaddon, 681–668, and his great-grandson Ashurbanipal, 668-626. After the inglorious reigns of two sons of Ashurbanipal, followed by the reign of a certain Ashuruballit, Assyria fell before the attack of her foes in 609 B.C., Nineveh having been captured by the Medes three years previously.[1]

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[1] The date usually given is 745–727.

[2] Olmstead's *History of Assyria*, p. 175. New York, 1923.

[3] 2 Kings xv. 23–25.

[4] 2 Kings xv. 1, 2, 27, and Isa. vi. 1.

[5] 2 Chron. xxvi. 21.

[6] 2 Kings xvi. 7 and xv. 29.

As Bible students our interest in the story of this great military power, the scourge and oppressor of God's chosen people, culminates in the reign of Sennacherib and in his vain attempt to take

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[1] See *The Fall of Nineveh*, by C. J. Gadd of the Brit. Museum, 1923.

Jerusalem in the famous campaign of 701 B.C. Here, indeed, the prophecies of Isaiah become intensely interesting, and many are the passages which will engage our attention as we go on to study that great deliverance. But there are other predictions in the earlier part of Isaiah's Book which were to find their fulfilment after the deliverance of Jerusalem, as, for instance, the destruction of Babylon by water, chap. xiv. 23, and the shattering of her idol gods, chap. xxi. 9, both of which were fulfilled to the letter by Sennacherib in 689 B.C. The prophecy contained in "the Burden of Egypt," that Jehovah "will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord, and a fierce king shall rule over them," chap. xix. 4, appears to have had its fulfilment under the kings of the Saite or XXVIth Dynasty, whose rule, however glorious in the eyes of the world at large, was very oppressive and involved much suffering as regarded their own subjects. Lastly, we have the predicted captivity of Judah at the hands of Babylon, chap. xxxix, foretold to Hezekiah by Isaiah when the Jewish monarch was flattered at the coming of an embassy from Merodachbaladan the Chaldean king of Babylon a few years before the invasion of Sennacherib. The point of that prediction lies in this: that the great Nebuchadnezzar, who was to lead Judah captive, belonged to the same Chaldean stock and to the same tribe of the Chaldeans as Merodachbaladan; indeed, modern research has rendered it highly probable that he was a lineal descendant of that king.[1]

The mention of Babylon leads us on to a consideration of the second world-power in the days of Isaiah, symbolised by the epithet "Leviathan the Crooked Serpent." What has just been said will help to explain why in chap. xxvii. 1 Babylon holds the second place. For, as regards extent of dominion, throughout the period we are considering Babylon could never for a moment compare with the vast realm of Ethiopia-Egypt, and at the beginning of the Isaianic age, except for her traditional prestige as a religious centre and as the old mother country from which the Assyrians sprang, she was little more than first among the petty kingdoms in the lower part of the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris. What made Babylon a political power was the aggressive policy of Assyria. When her Chaldean rulers saw from the action of Tiglathpileser that Assyria meant to incorporate Babylon in her empire, then they began to put up a stout resistance. For awhile they were overpowered and had to receive that monarch as their king; but with the coming of a new dynasty they broke out into rebellion, and held their own against Assyria for twelve long years, 722–710. Five years later, when Sennacherib came to the throne, they broke out into rebellion again, and gave that monarch little peace till in 689 he razed their city to the ground and sought to wipe it off from the face of the earth. Esarhaddon endeavoured to undo what his father had done and to win over the Babylonians by rebuilding their city. At the close of his reign, still further to soothe their restless pride, he appointed his younger son Shamash-shum-ukin to be king of Babylon under his elder brother Ashurbanipal whom he appointed to the throne of Assyria. But this very policy proved the undoing of Assyria; for Shamash-shum-ukin, urged on by his Babylonian subjects, presently claimed complete independence, and fomented a dangerous rebellion in the empire. That rebellion greatly weakened Assyria, and the severity with which it was at last put down in 648 B.C. only helped to stir up in the Chaldeans a fixed determination to be some day avenged of their cruel foe. When then Ashurbanipal committed the suicidal act of appointing a Chaldean, Bel-ibni, as his viceroy in Babylonia, that official, noting the failing strength of Assyria, set himself quietly to work to lay the foundations of the New Babylonian Empire.[1]

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[1] Olmstead, p. 453.

The interest attaching to Babylon has led us far beyond the period we are considering. We must therefore hark back to the Isaianic age with the observation that in the days of Isaiah Babylon came very much to the front, because by her proud spirit of independence and refusal to be incorporated in the Assyrian empire or to be ruled by any other monarch than a king of her own she very much hindered Assyria's schemes for the conquest of the West. The "rumour,"[2] which was to reach Sennacherib and cause him to return to Assyria, was in all probability, as the Assyrian records show, a rumour of troubles in Babylonia. Further, the much-desired conquest of Egypt was rendered an impossibility so long as Babylon remained unsubmissive. Not till Esarhaddon had united the two kingdoms were the Assyrians able to undertake that great task.

Under the symbol of "the Dragon that is in the Sea" Isaiah reckons Egypt as the third great world-power. In the middle of the eighth century B.C. Egypt was in a state of anarchy, divided among many petty rulers. One of these, Tafnakhti prince of Sais, began about 740 B.C. to establish his supremacy in the Western Delta, and some twenty years later marched up the Nile on a career of conquest.[3] This led the Theban princes to call in the aid of the Ethiopian rulers, who were sprung from members of the royal Theban line by whom an independent sovereignty had been established in Ethiopia rather more than two centuries before.[1] In response to this appeal from Thebes Pionkhi the Ethiopian overran Egypt and established his power in that city, Egyptian princes being still allowed to reign in Lower Egypt. Somewhat later, *ca.* 716, Shabaka king of Ethiopia brought the whole of Egypt under his sway and became the founder of the XXVth or Ethiopian Dynasty. It is this Egypto-Ethiopian power which comes before us in the first part of the Book of Isaiah. As regards Assyria she stands on the offensive rather than on the aggressive. As regards Palestine she seeks, not to conquer or absorb the small Palestinian kingdoms, but rather to establish them as buffer-states between herself and Assyria. It is with this object that she sends her troops to garrison Ashdod in 712 B.C., and then eleven years later advances, though somewhat tardily, to the help of Hezekiah. Compared with Babylon we may feel sure that in the eyes of Assyria Egypt must have occupied quite a secondary place. For the prestige of Assyria, now become a first-rate power, depended in no small measure on her being mistress of Babylon; while Egypt-Ethiopia was only a far-off prize, to be secured in part, so far as Egypt was concerned, at the end of a very hard struggle, Ethiopia still lying beyond her grasp.

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[1] Olmstead, p. 487.
[2] Isa. xxxvii. 7.
[3] Maspero, *Passing of the Empires*, pp. 166, 172.

Turning next to the lesser powers, we find on the Mediterranean seaboard the famous Phoenician cities, Tyre and Zidon, which in the Isaianic age were united under one crown. These, as being engaged in commerce rather than in conquest, do not make much show in the political world. To the Assyrians they appeared as wealthy mercantile communities, somewhat difficult to deal with because of the naval power of Tyre and her insular position, but still, with judicious handling, likely to afford much treasure which might be useful to Assyria in her schemes of conquest. It was from Tyre that Tiglathpileser extorted the enormous tribute of 150 talents.

Inland from Phoenicia across the ranges of the Lebanon and Antilebanon lay the Syrian kingdom of Damascus. Damascus itself, at the foot of the eastern slope of the latter, a city of great antiquity, was of importance both as an emporium of commerce and also as the centre of a large and very fertile oasis. Clearly, this city had to be taken before Assyria could hope to make Palestine her own. It must, therefore, have been with a glad heart that Tiglathpileser listened to the appeal of Ahaz to come and help him against the combined forces of Syria and Israel.

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[1] Idem, *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 772.

To the north of Damascus lay the kingdoms of Hamath and Arpad. Hamath, stretching from north to south up the Orontes valley, offered the best line of march for an army advancing on Egypt. Near the head of the valley the military road turned westward through the Wady Brissa to the Mediterranean coast. The size of the ruin mound on the site of the capital city, which bore the same name as the country, as well as the numerous inscriptions discovered there, testify to the former importance of Hamath.[1] Arpad lay to the north of Hamath, between Carchemish and the Syrian Antioch. It was an important post for the Assyrians to hold, both as a block to the southern advance of Ararat, and as enabling them to secure the trade with Asia Minor. Carchemish, on the right bank of the Euphrates and at the point where the river approaches nearest to the Mediterranean, was a great mart of commerce. It paid tribute to Tiglathpileser, but afterwards rebelled and was captured by Sargon in 717 B.C. Calno, or Calneh,[2] according to Olmstead, lay on the Mediterranean a little to the south of the mouth of the Orontes: Anspacher places it between Hamath and Arpad. It was taken by Tiglathpileser at the same time as Hamath, but appears to have rebelled and to have been taken a second time in the reign of Sargon: see Isa. x. 9.

Philistia, settled by a warlike race from Crete, lay on the direct route to Egypt. It was repeatedly invaded, as we have already pointed out, during the period at which we are looking.[3] It was also much weakened and disintegrated by the conquests of Uzziah and Hezekiah: see 2 Chron. xxvi. 6 and 2 Kings xviii. 8.

The small kingdoms of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, are not much in evidence in the Assyrian inscriptions. Lying on the eastern side of the deep depression of the Jordan valley, they were away from the path taken by Assyrian armies when invading Palestine or marching on Egypt. Hence they are only mentioned incidentally: generally, as paying tribute. In 711, at the siege of Ashdod, Moab and Ammon are spoken of as plotting along with Judah against Assyria. In 701, during the invasion of Sennacherib, all three took the side of Assyria, and hastened to Phoenicia to pay tribute to the invader. Later, in the reign of Esarhaddon, all the states of Palestine including Judah, at that time under Manasseh, paid homage to that prince and contributed towards the building of the new palace he was then erecting at Nineveh.

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[1] Olmstead, p. 130.

[2] Isa. x. 9, Amos vi. 2.

[3] See the Note, "On the Date of the Accession of Hezekiah."

South or rather east of the countries just mentioned lay the Arabia of the Old Testament and of the Assyrian inscriptions, comprising only the northern part of the great peninsula now so called, and extending as far north as Damascus. Tiglathpileser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal, all make mention of the Arabs, either as tendering tribute, receiving chastisement, or acting as mercenaries in armies fighting against Assyria. Arabia was of importance to Assyria, first, from a commercial point of view, the products of the East being brought by caravans through that country; secondly, because the Arabs could so easily either hinder or aid the march of her armies against Egypt. The two short Burdens in the latter part of Isaiah, chap. xxi, are both concerned with the warlike raids of Sennacherib in Arabia.

Lastly, we have to consider the position held by the sister kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Israel, after the brilliant victory of Jehoash over Amaziah of Judah,[1] went forward on a career of glory during the first half of the long reign of his son Jeroboam II, which reign falls within the compass of the still longer reign of Azariah-Uzziah of Judah. Unhappily, the successful wars of Jeroboam and the prosperity which followed only led the way to that period of luxury, debauchery, and grinding oppression of the poor, which we find so powerfully depicted in the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, and which drew from Jehovah the penal sentence, "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus."[2] At the time when that sentence was uttered there was little to show how it would be executed. Politically, the power of Israel was beginning to decline and Judah was fast taking her place. But there was little to point out Assyria as the chosen instrument of the Divine judgment, for that power was just then at her lowest ebb. A few brief years, however, and a great change had come over the scene. With startling suddenness Tiglathpileser had put new life into that enfeebled power, and Menahem, who usurped the throne of Israel only seven months after the death of Jeroboam, was forced to stave off Assyrian invasion by paying tribute to that monarch.[3] In her relation with the surrounding nations things were now greatly changed as regards Israel. Her supremacy over Hamath[4] had passed away: Hamath, as the annals of Tiglathpileser show, being now in alliance with Judah. Syria, on the other hand, against whom she had warred so successfully in the days of Jeroboam,[5] was now her fast friend, with whose help she vainly hoped to take Jerusalem a second time and so recover her pre-eminence as the first of the two Jewish kingdoms.[1] It was this fatal alliance with Syria which was to hasten her downfall by leading Ahaz to call in the help of Assyria.[2] Thus only some four years after the payment of Menahem's tribute Assyria again invaded the land of Israel, carrying captive the inhabitants of the northern districts and of the country on the east of Jordan. Then, only ten years later, the final blow was dealt by Assyria at the capture of Samaria.[3]

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[1] 2 Kings xiv. 11–14.

[2] Amos v. 27.

[3] 2 Kings xv. 19, 20.

[4] 2 Kings xiv. 28.

[5] 2 Kings xiv. 28.

The small kingdom of Judah was but a petty province compared to the mighty empires of Assyria and Egypt on either side of her. Yet Sennacherib speaks of Judah, as *rapshu nagû*, an "extensive district," signifying that she was large compared to the smaller kingdoms around her. Also his inscriptions show that he looked upon Hezekiah as by no means a contemptible foe, and regarded him as the ringleader of rebellion in southern Palestine. Judah was strongly guarded by her fenced cities. To capture these was a feat which the Assyrian thought well worthy of record, and his famous bas-relief of the siege of Lachish is a standing testimony to the same effect. Judah, too, was populous: she had no fewer than forty-six fenced cities, and the number of captives carried away by Sennacherib reached the large total of 200,150 persons. Evidently her importance was not to be gauged by the extent of her territory. Her prestige, too, was considerable. The tradition of mighty kings having reigned in Jerusalem was handed down even to Persian times.[4] And though the era of David and Solomon was now long past, yet Judah had been able to make her influence felt in the early years of Tiglathpileser, when under the prosperous rule of Uzziah she bolstered up Hamath against Assyria. Since then, indeed, things had gone the other way: "the Lord had brought Judah low because of Ahaz, for he had dealt wantonly in Judah, and trespassed sore against the Lord." But now once again under his son Hezekiah the little kingdom was going forward. The Scripture record tells how "the Lord was with him," so that "whithersoever he went forth he prospered." More particularly are we told how "he smote the Philistines unto Gaza and the borders thereof," [5] and the inscriptions of Sennacherib bear witness to the truthfulness of the record. For that monarch speaks of Ekron in terms which show that it was absorbed in Judah, and tells us that the king of Ashkelon bore the name of Zedekiah, from which we infer that he was a Jew and the nominee of the Jewish king.[1] Towards the middle of his reign Hezekiah, on his recovery from sickness, received an embassy from Merodachbaladan the Chaldean, who was then plotting to recover the throne of Babylon. The account of what he showed the ambassadors on that occasion is a clear witness to the prosperity of his country.[2] His treasury was replenished; his armoury well supplied; Jerusalem also was strongly fortified.[3] In fine, all the sinews of war were his. During Sennacherib's invasion he was sufficiently well off to employ Arab mercenaries, and presently to pay a very costly tribute, as the inscriptions of that monarch testify. Indeed, such was the position of the little kingdom of Judah under Hezekiah that she was able almost alone and unaided to put up so bold a resistance that the all-powerful invader in one of his inscriptions, speaking of the Jewish state, writes as follows: " the strong proud Hezekiah its king I brought in submission." [4]

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[1] Isa. vii. 2, 5, 6.
[2] 2 Kings xvi. 7.
[3] 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6.
[4] Ezra iv. 20.
[5] 2 Kings xviii. 7, 8.

The above review of the political condition of the world of Western Asia in the Isaianic age may lead us on to inquire, What was the policy advocated by the prophet himself? Isaiah, in the earlier chapters of his book, appears before us, not as a politician, but as a preacher of righteousness and of coming judgment. Not till we reach the seventh chapter does he come before us in that light. His policy is then seen to be a policy of absolute faith and trust in Jehovah the Supreme Ruler: to quote his own words in chap. xxvi. 4, " Trust ye in Jehovah for ever: for in Jah Jehovah is an everlasting rock." Isaiah, doubtless, was a man of forethought and of foresight: but he was more than that. His fulfilled predictions show that he was a man of foreknowledge, an inspired prophet; and this foreknowledge dictated his policy. So then, when Ahaz at the beginning of his reign was inclining to an alliance with Assyria as the only way to overcome his foes, he was encouraged by the prophet not to fear the combined forces of Pekah king of Israel and Rezin king of Syria. For what are these much-dreaded kings? Are they not merely the " tails of smoking firebrands," which will soon burn out? [5] Again, when Hezekiah was congratulating himself on the arrival of an embassy " from a far country, even from Babylon," the prophet told him that presently his descendants would be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.[6] Once more, when the Egyptian party in Jerusalem were sending a secret embassy down to Egypt, the prophet condemned their policy, not only because it was carried on in the dark and betrayed a spirit of distrust in Jehovah, but because it would prove useless, for " Egypt helpeth in vain and to no purpose." [1] It would be too much, perhaps, to say that in any case Isaiah would have condemned alliances and leagues of friendship with heathen nations ; but in the instances at which we have been looking he knew they would be of no avail. And even if he had not possessed this foreknowledge, his own words show that he realised that the threatened judgments could only be averted by a policy of repentance, faith, and obedience. " If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land : but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." [2] This, then, was the prophet's message from his God, and in the opening verses of the next chapter, in a very lovely passage taken from the utterances of his fellow prophet Micah, he expresses his belief that Israel will thus turn to their God " in the latter days." [3] Meanwhile—if so be he may by any means save some—he adds to Micah's words the loving invitation, " O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, col. iii. 1–10 and ii. 58.

[2] Isa. xxxix. 2.

[3] 2 Chron. xxvi. 9, 15, xxvii. 3, xxxii. 5, and Isa. xxii. 8–11

[4] Bull Inscriptions of Sennacherib.

[5] Isa. vii. 4.

[6] Isa. xxxix. 7.

Though Isaiah knows from what Jehovah has told him that Israel as a nation will not repent in his lifetime and that the immediate result of his ministry will be to harden the hearts of his hearers,[4] still all is not dark for him. His preaching is not altogether in vain, and he is able to gather round him a little band of disciples.[5] Further, although terrible judgments are at hand, yet he has been assured that a remnant of the people will be spared to return to their God.[6] And even when the prospect from a national point of view looks blacker, still all is not dark for him. For then it is that the stars of hope burst forth in his sky with surpassing brilliance. When " the gloom of anguish " reigns all around, a bright light shines forth : shines forth in Northern Israel, in those districts whose inhabitants have so lately been " driven away into thick darkness," the darkness of a hopeless captivity.[7] " The people that walked in darkness have seem a great light : they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,"—where the darkness lay deepest—" upon them hath the light shined." [8] For the long-expected Messianic king has come at last. David's throne has received its rightful occupant. " Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." A Ruler has appeared on the scene, who is well able to bear the weight of government and to carry on his shoulder " the key of the house of

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[1] Isa. xxx. 7.
[2] Isa. i. 19, 20.
[3] Isa. ii. 2–5, cf. Mic. iv. 1–2.
[4] Isa. vi. 9, 10.
[5] Isa. viii. 16.
[6] Isa. x. 21.
[7] Isa. viii. 21–ix. 2.
[8] *Ibid.*

David."[1] This is declared by his glorious fourfold name: "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."[2] He is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom"; [3] and His policy, wisely devised, is energetically carried out. For "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might."[4] Indeed it cannot be otherwise; for He is Immanuel, "God with us,"[5] the "mighty God," to whom the remnant of His people shall return.[6] At the same time as the ideal king He is the father of His people: "a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah."[7] And inasmuch as what is Divine must be eternal, He is the "Everlasting Father." Lastly, since the doing away with all the vestiges of cruel, hateful war is made to usher in this grand vision, so naturally the last of His four great titles strikes the same note. He is, to crown all, the Prince of Peace: one who "shall judge among the nations, and shall decide concerning many peoples," so that, satisfied with His arbitration, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."[8] It is with a "linked sweetness long drawn out" that the prophet dwells on this comforting thought, telling how there shall be no end "of the increase of his government and of peace": how His kingdom shall be established and upheld "with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever," and ending with an assurance to his fellow-countrymen "the zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform this."[9]

If the Peace-star shines forth thus brilliantly for our prophet amid the deep gloom caused by war, so also at a later period of his life, when the Assyrian troubles are over, another star, the star of the Resurrection, breaks in on the thick darkness which overwhelms him as he thinks of his depopulated country, of the multitudes removed by death and captivity, and is tempted to complain that no real deliverance has been wrought.[10] Then it is, at a moment of bitter disappointment, that he catches sight of this star of hope, and immediately his deep despondency is exchanged for strong, rejoicing confidence, as he looks up to his God and cries, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of light, and the earth shall give birth to[1] the shades." "If one has seen a place of graves in the East," writes Sir Geo. Adam Smith, "he will appreciate this figure, which takes dust for death and dew for life. With our damp graveyards *mould* has become the traditional trappings of death: but where under the hot Eastern sun things do not rot into lower forms of life, but crumble into sapless powder, that will not keep a worm in life, *dust* is the natural symbol of death."[2] Hence the form of the primæval sentence on man: "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."[3] Hence the description of the dead as "sleeping in the dust."[4] Then, since the resting place of the body connects itself in men's thoughts with the resting place of the spirit, the spirits of the departed are also spoken of as dwelling in the dust, *i.e.* of the Underworld.[5] But in Nature, where all is dust on the dry, thirsty soil, the heavy dews of the East can in a single night wake up all to life and beauty. It is the thought of this marvellous change that leads the prophet to cry out to his God, "Thy dew is *as* the dew of light," or rather "a dew of lights is thy dew." To him the myriad sparkling drops of dew on the wakened grass appear as a wondrous birth from "the womb of the morning,"[6] a birth from death to life, a revival rather than a new creation; in fine, the promise of a resurrection: "A dew of lights is thy dew, and the earth shall give birth to the shades."

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[1] Isa. xxii. 22. The primitive wooden key still used in Palestine was of considerable size and weight and was literally carried on the shoulder.

[2] Isa. ix. 6.

[3] Isa. xxviii. 29.

[4] Isa. xi. 2.

[5] Isa. vii. 14, viii. 8, 10.

[6] Isa. x. 21.

[7] Isa. xxii. 21.

[8] Isa. ii. 4, R.V.M.

[9] Isa. ix. 7.

[10] Isa. xxvi. 17, 18.

Nowhere in the Old Testament shall we find more blessed promises than these. The times of darkness and depression through which Isaiah was called to pass, the spirit of unbelief which led the nation and its rulers to turn a deaf ear to his counsels, the loneliness of his position, the scenes of death and destruction which it was his lot to witness—all these sorrows doubtless directed his thoughts upwards, until he was able, assisted by light from above, to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God. What a wealth of blessed experience must have been his who wrote, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee": who encourages us to "trust in Jehovah for ever; for in the LORD JEHOVAH is an everlasting rock"[7];

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[1] The Causative Conjugation of the same verb which in the Simple Conjugation is rendered by the R.V.M. "be born" in the previous verse.

[2] *Expositor's Bible: Isaiah*, vol. i, pp. 447; a very striking passage.

[3] Gen. iii. 19.

[4] Job vii. 21, Dan. xii. 2.

[5] So in that famous Babylonian epic, the Descent of Ishtar, which has been well described as "unsurpassed for splendid poetry and sombre grandeur," the Underworld is pictured as "the house of dust, where dust is their food, where dust lies thick on door and bolt."

[6] Ps. cx. 3.

[7] Isa. xxvi. 3, 4.

who puts into the lips of the pardoned that strain of rejoicing confidence, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and song; and he is become my salvation."[1] Surely never was any man more worthy of the name he bore than this great prophet, whose message to believing souls is summed up in the words, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord."[2]

With regard to the private life of the prophet Isaiah very little indeed is known. He appears to have been married twice,[3] and like the prophet Hosea[4] he had three children who all bore prophetic names, Shear-jashub, Immanuel, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz. His home was in Jerusalem;[5] but after the close of his earlier ministry he seems to have retired from the capital into Northern Israel, possibly to escape the wrath of Ahaz,[6] returning again to Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah. His ministry, which began in the reign of Uzziah, *i.e.* before 738 B.C., must have lasted at least forty years, and quite possibly fifty years, for according to an ancient Jewish tradition which goes back to the time of Justin Martyr, *ca.* A.D. 150, he was sawn asunder by Manasseh (whose reign begun *ca.* 692) and some of his prophecies, viz. those contained in chaps. xxiv–xxvii, give the impression of having been written in his old age.[7] Besides the prophecies contained in his Book, the Chronicler informs us that he wrote a history of the long reign of Uzziah[8] and also a work called "The Vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz," which formed part of "The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel" so often referred to in the Books of Chronicles.[9]

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[1] Isa. xii. 2. The name Isaiah, Heb. Yᵉshâ‘yâhū, signifies "Jah is salvation."

[2] Ps. iii. 8.

[3] Chapter V below.

[4] Hos. i. 4, 6, 9.

[5] 2 Kings xx. 4.

[6] Chapter V.

[7] Chapter XXV below.

[8] 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

[9] 2 Chron. xxxii. 32.

CHAPTER II

THE ADVANCING TIDE

"Is not Hamath as Arpad?"—ISA. x. 9.

IT has been well remarked that if the Babylonians had a passion for religion, the Assyrians were devoted to history. "The Assyrians," writes Goodspeed, "were remarkably gifted with the historic sense."[1] We cannot be too thankful for this feature in their character; but since, as Prof. Sayce assures us, "Chronology is the skeleton of History," we must first understand their system of chronology before we can grasp their history.

The Assyrian Eponym List is an annual register in which each year is called after some high official. Thus the first full year of the reign is called after the king, the second after the Tartan or commander-in-chief, the third after the Chamberlain of the Palace, sometimes after the Chief Cellarer, and so forth. To some of these lists is added the chief event of each year, including military expeditions, years of peace, pestilences, revolutions, and, last but not least, an eclipse of the sun,[2] which took place in the 8th year of Ashur-dan and according to astronomical calculations happened in 763 B.C. It is the determination of the date of this eclipse which has enabled us to fix the whole system of Assyrian chronology and by means of it to calculate the exact date of various events which happened in the Isaianic times, such as the year when Menahem paid tribute to Pul, when Damascus was taken, when Samaria fell, and when Sargon took Ashdod.

But the Eponym List when accompanied by these historical addenda does more than this, for it provides us with a simple outline of the political conditions of the Assyrian world, and in so doing reveals at the same time the chief aims of the reigning monarch. This appears very clearly in the addenda list for the reign of Tiglathpileser III, which runs thus:

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[1] *History of Assyria and Babylonia*, pp. 32, 40.

[2] Probably the eclipse predicted in Amos viii. 9.

B.C.

745 In the month Iyyar, thirteenth day, Tiglathpileser seated himself on the throne. In the month Tisri he marched to the country between the rivers (*i.e.* Babylonia).

744 To the land Namri. (Between Assyria and Media.)

743 In the town Arpad. (A little north of Aleppo.) The troops of Ararat (Armenia) were slain.

742 To the town Arpad.

741 To the town Arpad. After three years it was taken.

740 To the town Arpad.

739 To the land Ulluba. (On the Ararat frontier, N.W. of Assyria.) The town Birtu was rebuilt.

738 The town Cullani was captured. (The Biblical Calneh, on the Mediterranean coast W. of Hamath.)

737 To the land A.A. (Media).

736 To the foot of the Nal range. (Near the source of the Tigris.)

735 To Ararat.

734 To Philistia.

733 To Damascus.

732 To Damascus.

731 To the town Sapiya. (In Babylonia.)

730 At home. (Lit. " In the land.")

729 The king takes the hands of Bel (viz. at the New Year festival at Babylon).

728 The king takes the hands of Bel. The town . . .

727 To the town . . . Shalmaneser seated himself on the throne.

It can be shown from the above list that Tiglathpileser had three main objects in view which he kept steadily before him throughout his reign, viz. (i) to secure Assyria against the growing power of Ararat and the forward movement of the Medes, (ii) to make himself master of Babylon, (iii) to conquer and permanently hold Syria and Palestine. The first of these objects was a matter of life and death for Assyria. The power of Ararat had been growing very strong, and but for the political genius and warlike prowess of Tiglathpileser would soon have overshadowed Assyria ; and the Median tribes, though as yet under no central rule, required to be held in check. The expeditions for the years 744, 743, 739, and 737–735, were directed against either Ararat or Media. The second object, viz. the acquisition of Babylon, is suggested by the opening expedition of 745 and the much later expedition of 731, undertaken after the frontiers of the empire had been extended and secured ; whilst the entries for 729 and 728 show the king's intention to gratify the pride of the Babylonians by making Babylon the second capital of his empire.

We have now to look at the third object, viz. the conquest of the West. And first we notice with surprise that Arpad is mentioned in no less than four successive years: also, that after Tiglathpileser has been "*in* Arpad" in 743 he was compelled to besiege it for three years before he finally captured it. What was the power that wrested Arpad from the Assyrian? Presumably Ararat. But why after its capture did Tiglathpileser make a fourth expedition thither? Because Arpad on its lofty fortress-mound was a valuable strategic site. It not only commanded the direct route to the Orontes, but it formed the key to the whole of Syria. With Arpad in his possession the conqueror could go forward to the conquest of Syria. .He could also hope to secure for Assyria the commerce of Damascus and Tyre and the rich revenue to be obtained from Palestine. Further, the way would thus be opened for the armies of Assyria to march against Egypt. Hence the four years spent over Arpad were well-spent years, and we find from the inscriptions of Tiglathpileser that, agreeably to his policy, he formed round Arpad the first Assyrian province in Syria. In 739 it was necessary to make an expedition to Ulluba on the southern frontier of Ararat, but in the following year the Assyrian armies appeared again in Middle Syria. The expedition to Cullani, the Calneh of Amos vi. 2 and Isa. x. 9, was as we know from the annals an expedition against Hamath. Cullani is placed by Olmstead on the Mediterranean coast,[1] by Anspacher between Arpad and Hamath.[2] About thirty lines of the annals are devoted to the conquest of Hamath, but the passage unhappily is much obliterated. It speaks of the siege and capture of many cities standing on lofty heights, which looked down as it were from the sky, and furnishes us with a long list of cities and mountains, glancing over which we catch sight of the names Lebanon, Amana (Cant. iv. 8), and Hadrach (Zech. ix. 1). But that which most impresses us is the statement at the close of this list which runs thus: "Nineteen districts of the town of Hamath, together with the towns in their neighbourhood, beside the Sea of the Setting Sun, which in their faithlessness had fallen away to Azariah, I restored to the territory of Assyria." This, coupled with the fact that the name *Az-ri-ia-u* or *Iz-ri-ia-u*—for it appears to be written both ways—sometimes with the addition *matu Ia-u-di* or *Ia-u-da-ai*, *i.e.* "of the land of Judah," occurs no less than five times in the passage, leads us to inquire, What had Azariah of Judah to do with Hamath?

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[1] Olmstead's map.

[2] *Tiglathpileser III*, Anspacher, 1912; being No. 5 of *Columbia University Contributions to Oriental History.*

Hamath was a Hittite kingdom of considerable importance as testified to by Amos vi. 2, " Hamath the great," as well as by the Assyrian inscriptions and the vast *tell* on the site of the principal city, which bore the same name as the country. In Zech. ix. 1, 2 Hamath is mentioned along with Hadrach, Damascus, and the united kingdom of Tyre and Zidon. David had friendly relations with Toi king of Hamath (2 Sam. viii. 10), and Solomon had treasure-cities in Hamath (2 Chron. viii. 4), which probably fell within his suzerainty (1 Kings iv. 21). Also it is recorded that Jeroboam in his wars extended the Israelite frontier as far north as the entering in of Hamath: and further, that " he recovered Damascus and Hamath, *which had belonged* to Judah, for Israel " (2 Kings xiv. 25, 28). This last statement has perplexed the commentators, and the italics possibly indicate that some words have fallen out of the text; but the passage probably means that Jeroboam acquired an ascendancy for Israel over Damascus and over Hamath, an ascendancy which, in the case of the latter, had formerly belonged to Judah. It is, then, interesting to learn from the annals of Tiglathpileser that in the reign of Azariah-Uzziah, who according to the Chronicler " waxed exceeding strong " and whose " name spread far abroad " (2 Chron. xxvi. 8, 15), Hamath again came within the sphere of the influence of Judah. Such a fact both illustrates and corroborates the Chronicler's statements as to the power of Uzziah and at the same time adds to our knowledge of the history of Hamath. It should be mentioned also here that a further corroboration of the Chronicler meets us in the tribute lists of Tiglathpileser. Thus in the list given in the annals for the king's 8th year, 738 B.C., tribute is paid by Rezin of Damascus, Menahem of Samaria, and Iniel of Hamath, but not by Judah or the states of Southern Palestine; whilst in a second and later list, written at the close of the king's 17th year, Hamath, Ammon, Moab, Ashkelon, Edom and Gaza all appear as tributaries, and along with them " Jehoahaz (Ahaz) of Judah." That is, at the earlier date the influence of Azariah-Uzziah was sufficiently strong to induce the neighbouring states to unite with him in refusing to pay tribute; whilst at the later, Ahaz, who was then on the throne and who had appealed to Assyria for help,[1] appears as a tributary.

According to the policy of Tiglathpileser some 30,000 of the inhabitants of Hamath were transported to the district of Que in Cilicia, and some 1200 to Ulluba on the frontier of Ararat, whilst people from other parts were settled in some of the coast cities. In spite of this removal, scarce twenty years later, in the early years of Sargon the founder of a new dynasty, Hamath became the centre of a dangerous rebellion, which was put down with great severity. "Yau-bihdi of Hamath," writes Sargon, "a wicked Hittite, set his heart on the sovereignty of Hamath, and led Arpad, Zemar, Damascus, and Samaria into revolt with him. He formed a league and prepared for battle. I mustered the mighty armies of the god Ashur. In the town of Qarqar his favourite city I besieged him along with his soldiers: I took it: burned Qarqar with fire. I flayed him, and slew in their towns the ringleaders of rebellion. 200 chariots, 600 cavalry, from among the men of Hamath, I appropriated and added to my royal troops."[1]

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[1] 2 Kings xvi. 7, 8.

The name of the Hamathite usurper mentioned in the above extract, viz. Yau-bihdi, is one of great interest. In another passage Sargon calls him Ilu-bihdi, where *ilu* "God" takes the place of Yau. Yau or Jau—for the J was pronounced as Y—is thus seen to be the name of a god. It is in fact the same as Jah, the shortened form of Jehovah, which appears in Isa. xii. 2 and xxvi. 4. The question thus arises, Was Jehovah worshipped in Hamath, or was the usurper a Jew? In view of the close connection of Hamath with the two Jewish kingdoms either of these alternatives is possible.

In Isa. x. 9, along with Calno, Hamath, and Arpad, we find mentioned Carchemish, Samaria, and Damascus. This shows us that the prophecy in which these names occur belongs to the age of Sargon (722–705). The rich emporium of Carchemish on the Middle Euphrates paid tribute to Tiglathpileser in 738, but was not then incorporated in the Assyrian empire. In 717, however, it broke out into rebellion, its ruler being urged on by the populace. This led to its capture by Sargon and the loss of its independence. Also, although Damascus was taken by Tiglathpileser, it was not until the beginning of the reign of Sargon that Samaria fell into the hands of the Assyrians. Very shortly after the fall of Samaria the putting down of the dangerous rebellion already alluded to, in which both Hamath and Arpad were involved, enabled the haughty conqueror again to utter his proud boast, "Is not Hamath as Arpad?"

Before closing this chapter it is necessary for me to advert to the fact that the eminent Assyriologist, Winckler, has unhappily sought to identify *Az-ri-ia-u* (*matu*) *Ya-ū-da-ai*, not with the Biblical Azariah, but with an otherwise unknown monarch, who is supposed to have sat on the throne of Ya'di, which formed part of the kingdom of Samal in Northern Syria. The succession to the throne of Ya'di appears to have run as follows:

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[1] Grand Inscription of Khorsabad, lines 33–36.

Panammu I.
Panammu II, son of Bar-tsur and possibly a grandson of Panammu I.
Bar-rekub, son of Panammu II.

Of these kings the first and the last have left us inscriptions in Aramaic, written in alphabetic characters, which are of no small interest. From an inscription of Bar-rekub we learn that his grandfather, Bar-tsur, was slain in an insurrection, and that this led his father Panammu II to call in the aid of Tiglathpileser. In support of Winckler's view it is suggested that the leader of the insurrection, whose name has not survived in the partially obliterated record, was the *Az-ri-ia-ū matu Ya-ū-da-ai* mentioned by Tiglathpileser in the account of his conquest of Hamath.

Putting on one side the purely speculative character of the above suggestion, I wish to point out that it is utterly impossible to equate *Ya'di*—written יאדי in the Aramaic inscriptions of Panammu and Bar-rekub—with the Assyrian *Ya-ū-da-ai.* The cuneiform inscriptions, written in syllabic characters, make mention of:

Az-ri-ia-u (*matu*) *Ya-ū-da-ai*
Ya-u-kha-zi (*matu*) *Ya-ū-da-ai*
Kha-za-qi-ia-u (*matu*) *Ya-ū-da-ai*

answering respectively to "Azariah," "Jehoahaz" (Ahaz), and "Hezekiah of the land of Judah," and we notice that in every case "Judah" is written *Ya-ū-da-ai* with a long ū, of which there is no trace in the Aramaic יאדי *Ya'di.* But further—and this surely is an argument fatal to Winckler's theory—the Aramaic for "Judah," known to us from the Book of Daniel and also from the Elephantine papyri of the fifth century B.C., is not יאדי but יהוד, where the long ū is represented by the letter ו. We may, then, rest assured that despite all seeming difficulties, geographical or historical, *Az-ri-ia-ū matu Ya-ū-da-ai* is neither more nor less than "Azariah of Judah," whose might as recorded by the Chronicler finds corroboration in the annals of Tiglathpileser III.

CHAPTER III

THE CALL OF ISAIAH

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"—ISA. vi. 8.

THE first historic, as well as prophetic, picture in the Book of Isaiah meets us in the sixth chapter and in the account there given us of Isaiah's call to the prophetic office. The passage is historic in view of the date with which it opens, and prophetic in the revelation made to the youthful Isaiah at the close of his wondrous vision as to what would be the main result of his faithful testimony. I propose, therefore, to dwell first on the historic crisis at the time of the prophet's call, and then to pass on to the call itself.

Let me ask, then, what was the state of things at the close of Uzziah's long reign? This question will be best answered by glancing back for a few years at the previous history of the two Jewish kingdoms, Israel and Judah. During the earlier part of the reign of Tiglathpileser (745–727) the usurper Menahem was seated on the throne of Israel. In 2 Kings xv. 19–20 the historian tells us of a threatened invasion by Assyria of the land of the Ten Tribes during the reign of this monarch, and how it was staved off by a payment of tribute. "There came against the land Pul the king of Assyria; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land." This is the first overshadowing of the land of Israel by the Assyrian colossus. Pul is another name of Tiglathpileser: it is the name under which he presently reigned as king of Babylon. It answers to the *Phulus rex Chaldaeorum* of the Babylonian historian Berosus. In the list of the kings of Babylon, known as the Canon of Ptolemy, we find under the year 731 B.C. Chinzerus and Porus. Chinzerus is Ukin-zir, the Chaldean prince of Amukkan who was conquered by Tiglathpileser, and Porus—the Persian form of Pulus—is the Babylonian name of the conqueror. Again, in the native Babylonian king-list we have the following sequence:

Ukin-zer	3 years
Pulu	2 ..
Ululai	5 ,,
Marduk-apal-iddina	12 ,,

where Pulu stands for Tiglathpileser, Ululai—" he of the month Elul "—for his son Shalmaneser, and Marduk-apal-iddina is the Merodachbaladan of Scripture. It has been questioned whether Pul was the proper name of Tiglathpileser or a name given to him by the Babylonians. The former is the more probable if we are to be guided by the name Ululai here given to his son. For why should the Babylonians trouble themselves as to what month a man was born in? but his parents might very well do so.

The threatened invasion of Israel by Tiglathpileser belongs to the year 738 B.C., the year in which the Assyrian king conquered Hamath and Calno; and it is evident from the passage in 2 Kings xv, quoted above, that but for the tribute paid by Menahem he would have conquered and annexed the land of Israel at the same time.

As shown in the last chapter the annals of Tiglathpileser for his 8th year, 738 B.C., bear witness to the fact that he was able in that year to lay Syria and Northern Palestine under tribute, whilst Judah under the strong rule of Uzziah still retained her independence. After 738 B.C. very rapid changes must have taken place both in Judah and in Israel. According to the Assyrian records in 738 Azariah-Uzziah was reigning over Judah and Menahem was reigning over Israel; whilst only four years later, viz. in 734, Tiglathpileser responded to the appeal of Ahaz for help against Pekah and Rezin. Hence in 734 Ahaz must have been on the throne of Judah and Pekah on the throne of Israel. We have, therefore, to insert the reigns of Jotham the son of Uzziah over Judah, and of Pekahiah the son of Menahem over Israel, into the interval 738 to 734. The best way to do this appears to be as follows:

738 Menahem dies and is succeeded by his son Pekahiah in the 50th year of Uzziah. 2 Kings xv. 23.

736 The usurper Pekah takes the place of Pekahiah in the 52nd year of Uzziah. 2 Kings xv. 27. Uzziah himself dies at the close of the year. 2 Kings xv. 2.

735 Jotham ascends the throne of Judah at the New Year, in the

2nd year of Pekah, 2 Kings xv. 32, but dies and is succeeded by Ahaz before the year is out.

734 Tiglathpileser, responding to the appeal of Ahaz, invades Palestine. 2 Kings xvi. 7.

In 2 Kings xv. 33 the length of Jotham's reign is given as sixteen years, but for almost the whole of that time he must have been associated with his father Uzziah. Accordingly the Chronicler, after telling how Uzziah for his sacrilegious intrusion into the priest's office was smitten with leprosy, adds, "and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land." The account of Jotham's reign as given in 2 Chron. xxvii. must be looked upon as embracing the whole of his sixteen years, and not merely the short interval during which he was the sole occupant of the throne. We are told that "he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah had done"; that he looked after the temple buildings and the fortifications of Jerusalem, and built cities in the hill country of Judah, and castles and towers in the forests or wooded heights. Further, the Chronicler gives him an excellent character, and tells us that "he became mighty because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God." The attention paid by Jotham to fortifying his capital and covering his land with fortresses shows that like his father he fully realised the critical days in which his lot was cast.

Before Jotham died Syria and Israel united their forces against Judah. "In those days," says the Sacred Historian, "the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah."[1] But why so under the reign of this godly monarch? Because, as related by the Chronicler, "the people did yet corruptly":[2] a statement verified to the full by the dark record given us in the earlier chapters of the Book of Isaiah. For it appears from Isaiah chap. i. that though the temple buildings had been well looked to by Jotham and its services duly maintained, yet those services were nothing more than an empty form, a mockery and provocation in the eyes of Him who looks at the lives of His worshippers. "When ye come to appear before me," says the Almighty, "who hath required this at your hand, to trample my courts?"[3] The low state of morality corresponded to the low state of religion. The administration of justice was abused, and even the princes took bribes.[4] Large estates were formed regardless of the regulations of the Law of Moses.[5] The poor were oppressed:[6] the rich given to feasting and drunkenness,[1] whilst their wives and daughters were all for dress and display, haughty, wanton, and affected in their manners.[2] Idolatry was on the increase:[3] superstitious practices, whether from the East or the West, were welcomed.[4] Infidelity was openly confessed, and the Almighty challenged.[5] No respect was shown to age or position.[6] Indeed, so widespread was the general corruption that the prophet can only describe the state of his country by likening it to a human body completely diseased. "From the sole of the feet even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and festering sores."[7]

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[1] 2 Kings xv. 37.
[2] 2 Chron. xxvii 2.
[3] Isa. i. 12.
[4] Isa. i. 23.
[5] Isa. v. 8.
[6] Isa. i. 17, and iii. 15.

It was amid such a state of things that the youthful Isaiah was called to the prophetic office "in the year that king Uzziah died," 736 B.C.: a most eventful year as forming the close of a long and successful reign, during which the same policy was consistently carried out by the king and his son. Not that the sky was cloudless, for already Pekah and Rezin were making hostile incursions against Judah; but Judah still remained intact, and independent so far as Assyria was concerned. Isaiah's call probably came before the death of Uzziah, for, as told us in the first verse of his Book, he began to receive his visions in the days of that monarch. To date an event by something that happened in the same year is natural enough, and often done still. It is after this fashion that the annals of Khammurabi king of Babylon, the Amraphel of Gen. xiv., are dated. But in the present instance we may well suppose that Isaiah has a special reason for thus describing the vision in which he received his call. The long reign of Uzziah—fifty-two years—was a time of prosperity, and witnessed throughout the maintenance of a strong policy. Its close, now near at hand, was to usher in a period of upheaval and of very rapid changes. Looking back, then, on that eventful crisis in his life, the prophet realised doubtless how opportune was the grand vision then vouchsafed to him; how needful it was for him to be assured, amid all those changes and in the opposition that he was so soon to encounter, of the grand fact contained in the Psalmist's words:

> "Jehovah reigneth; He is apparelled with majesty;
> Jehovah is apparelled, He hath girded Himself with strength:"
>
> . . . .
>
> "Above the voice of many waters,
> The mighty breakers of the sea,
> Jehovah on high is mighty."[8]

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[1] Isa. v. 11, 12.
[2] Isa. iii. 16–23.
[3] Isa. ii. 8, 9.
[4] Isa. ii. 6.
[5] Isa. v. 18, 19.
[6] Isa. iii. 5.
[7] Isa. i. 6.
[8] Ps. xciii. 1, 4.

So then, what the Psalmist thus describes was presented to him in the form of a vision. "I saw the Lord," so he writes: "the Lord"—not simply Jehovah, but *Adonay*, the Lord and Master of the world. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train," the skirts of His robe, "filled the temple," or more exactly "the temple-hall," the Holy Place as distinguished from the Holy of Holies. For in this vision the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place is rent away, and in the inner chamber, in place of the cherubic throne with the Shechinah over it, is seen a throne with an Occupant, "the Lord, high and lifted up," the robe of whose glory flows through and completely fills the large outer chamber. The description of the Lord as "high and lifted up" is the same that meets us in Isa. lvii. 15, "the high and lifted up One[1] that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy." Very marked, too, is the resemblance between that passage and the one now before us; for there as here holiness is proclaimed as the divine characteristic, a holiness which places the Almighty at an infinite height above the creatures He has made, but at the same time does not prevent Him from stooping down "to him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Of such a stooping down on the part of the All-Holy One this vision gives us a very beautiful picture.

The throne of the Divine King is very properly seen placed in the Holy of Holies, the type of heaven, while the robe of the divine glory, a figure of the visible creation, fills the Holy Place, the type of the world that He has created. As a king has his courtiers about him who form the setting of the scene, so is it with the Divine King. "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne," says Micaiah, "and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left."[2] These courtiers are here the Seraphim. "Above him stood the Seraphim," "the fiery ones," only mentioned here. "Above him," as being in the air, they "stood," *i.e.* remained stationary, poised on the wing. This appears also from the description which follows: "Each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." As the Chaldee Targum well explains, "With twain he covered his face that he might not see, and with twain he covered his body that he might not be seen," whilst the remaining pair of wings both kept him poised in air and enabled him to fly swiftly in executing the divine commissions. By these holy beings, forming as it were the sides of a choir, was sung antiphonally the following strain :

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[1] The words used in the original are the same as here.

[2] 1 Kings xxii. 19.

> " Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts :
> Filling the whole earth is His glory."

At first we are tempted to look upon this song of the Seraphim in the light of Bishop Heber's noble hymn :

> " Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,
> All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth, and sky, and sea,"

but it is probable that Bishop Mant's lines better express the sense :

> " Lord, Thy glory fills the heaven,
> Earth is with its fulness stored,"

provided that we understand the " its " to refer, not to " earth," but to " glory." God's glory is the manifestation of His holiness. That manifestation, like the cloudy pillar, has a dark side as well as a bright, and here, it is the dark side that is brought forward ; just as when Jehovah, passing sentence of exclusion from Canaan on a generation of unbelieving rebels, utters the solemn oath, " As I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."[1] In what bright contrast to this vision of judgment stands the Evangelic announcement, " The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together : for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it." That we are right in thus understanding the song of the Seraphim appears from the fact that immediately after, and as if in response to their song, Isaiah who stood at the portal of the Holy House felt the ground rock under him, and " the house was filled with smoke." Here, as when " mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, and the whole mount quaked greatly,"[2] the smoke and the earthquake are demonstrations of the wrath of the Almighty against those sinners who set His laws at defiance. " The anger of the LORD and his jealousy," writes Moses, " shall smoke against that man."[3] And so the Psalmist, " Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture ? " Whilst David, in the timely storm which enabled him to escape from his foes, sees in these outward signs, not only an answer to his cry of distress, but a demonstration of Divine wrath against his cruel persecutors :

> " In my distress I called upon the LORD,
> And cried unto my God :
> He heard me out of His temple,
> And my cry before Him came into His ears.

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[1] Num. xiv. 21. [2] Exod. xix. 18. [3] Deut. xxix. 20.

> Then the earth shook and trembled,
> The foundations also of the mountains moved
> And were shaken, because he was wroth.
> There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
> And fire out of his mouth devoured:
> Coals were kindled at it."[1]

The idea of the earthquake being used to manifest the indignation of a god is found also in Babylonian literature. In an old ballad—written in Babylonian cuneiform of the Persian period but probably belonging to a much earlier date—in which a description is given of the devastation of Babylon by an Elamite king, to wit the Chedorlaomer of Gen. xiv., the poet tells how when the invader entered the temple of Bel, removed the veil and pressed forward into the inner shrine, "the god, clothed with light, like lightning lightened and shook the shrine," so that "the enemy trembled and halted."

At the sight of this awe-inspiring vision "Isaiah is overwhelmed with the sense of his own unworthiness; he feels himself cut off by a spiritual defect from participation in the solemn worship which he, alone of all mortals, has been privileged to behold; his *eyes* have seen, but his *lips* are impure."[2] "Woe is me!" he cries, "for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." But perhaps in this remarkable confession of sinfulness, viewed in the light of what follows so shortly after, we may see something more than Isaiah's strong sense that he was completely out of place. Is it not possible that they express a longing on his part to copy the Seraphim and proclaim aloud the holiness of Jehovah of hosts; aye, and that too before his sinful fellowmen, for his spirit has been stirred within him by all the sin which he sees going on around? But alas! he is a man of unclean lips, not fit for such a sacred task: and besides, his testimony would not be received; would do more harm than good; would call forth blasphemous utterances from the people of unclean lips among whom he dwells. At any rate he would gladly speak for Jehovah, and Jehovah means that he shall have his wish. So then, at his cry of distress, one of the Seraphim, flying to the altar, brings back a hot stone and with it touches his lips, saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin expiated."[3] Thus, even without sacrifice, is Isaiah put in direct communication with the altar: not the incense-altar which stood in the Holy Place, now completely filled with the robe of the divine glory, but the great altar of burnt offering outside the temple. The mention of a hot stone also points us to this altar rather than to the other; for though the altar of burnt offering was hollow, a wooden framework covered with a plating of bronze, yet according to Jewish tradition the hollow was filled in with earth and rough stones.[1] Further, Isaiah was told that his sin was expiated. Now according to the Levitical ritual the blood of the sin offering for the high priest or for the nation was placed on the horns of the incense altar, but the blood for the sin offering for the individual on the horns of the altar of burnt offering.[2] It was the altar of burnt offering which the publican saw through the open gateway in the Court of the Priests when he cried, "God be propitiated to me the sinner."[3] Isaiah, standing at the porch of the temple, has that altar behind him; but he knows quite well where the glowing stone is taken from and understands perfectly what it all means. His lips being thus touched, their sinfulness is as it were burnt away and consumed; just as in chap. iv. 4 the bloodstains of Jerusalem are said to be purged from the midst thereof "by the blast of judgment and by the blast of burning." Fire consumes: fire also purifies. Malachi predicts that the Lord's Messenger when He comes will be "like a refiner's fire": the Baptist proclaims, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."[4]

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[1] Ps. xviii. 6–8.

[2] Cambridge Bible *in loco*.

[3] Isa. vi. 7 R.V.M.

No sooner are the lips of the future prophet thus cleansed than he hears the voice of the Almighty King saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" These words are probably addressed to His courtiers as in the very similar vision of Micaiah in 1 Kings xxii. 19–22, where Jehovah, seated upon His throne with the host of heaven standing by Him on either side, inquires of them, "Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?" It is true the great God has no need to take counsel with any;[5] but both Isaiah's vision and that of Micaiah are modelled on the doings of earthly kings. When the Almighty's question falls on the ears of Isaiah, he answers with joyful alacrity, "Here am I, send me"; for this is just what he longs for: to be permitted as a commissioned agent to sound forth the holiness of Jehovah and to tell of His love—"Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah": "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah."

Isaiah, then, is to have his wish; but he can hardly have imagined, until it was now told him, how difficult and depressing his work would be. "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again and be healed." Feeling, hearing, sight, are the ducts by which man's soul is approached, but when the valve of the will is set the wrong way, each blast of the preacher only shuts that valve the closer, so that the inner man becomes ever more and more unapproachable. Thus the same preaching that awakens one soul to repentance, makes another only the more dull of hearing. To preach to deaf ears, to enter on a ministry of condemnation, was indeed a terrible prospect. Well, then, may the youthful prophet inquire, "Lord, how long?" How long shall I go on doing this? How long is this hardening process to continue? He is thinking not only, or chiefly, of himself, but of those to whom he is to preach. To this the Almighty replies that he is to go on till the divine judgments have overtaken the sinful nation: "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and the LORD have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land." Here is foretold the captivity of the Ten Tribes under Tiglathpileser, Shalmaneser, and Sargon; for they too are included along with Judah in the words "this people": see chaps. viii. 6, 12, 14, ix. 16, xxviii. 11, 14, xxix. 13, 14. Predictions of the calamities coming on the Northern Kingdom will be found in chaps. vii. 4–9, viii. 4, ix. 1. Here they are described from the point of view of the devastated land. The Almighty speaks of cities deserted, houses tenantless, and "a great vacancy in the midst of the land."[1] The policy of Tiglathpileser, copied by his successors, was to seek to denationalise conquered peoples by wholesale deportations of the population, followed by wholesale importations from other districts. But so busy were Assyria's warlike kings that in some cases only the first half of this policy would be carried out at the time. We do not know, for instance, of any immediate attempt made to repopulate the devastated parts of Northern Israel after the campaigns of 734–732. On the other hand, Sargon after the capture of Samaria brought strangers into the land in 721 and again in 715. Ashurbanipal's account of his devastation of Elam helps us to realise what is here meant by the words "and great be the vacancy in the midst of the land."[1] "For a whole month," writes the ruthless conqueror, "I devastated the country of Elam throughout its extent. I deprived the meadows of the voices of men, the tramp of oxen and sheep, and the sound of sweet music. Wild asses, gazelles, beasts of the field, all of them, I caused to lie down therein in safety."[1] This same note of devastation, desertion, and desolation as the result of Assyrian conquest is struck in many other passages. See chaps. xiv. 23, xvii. 1, 2, 6, 9, xxiii. 1, xxiv. 6–12, xxvii. 10, 11, xxviii. 22, xxxii. 13, 14, xxxiii. 8.

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[1] Exod. xx. 25 and xxvii. 8.
[2] Lev. iv. 7, 18, 25, 30, 34.
[3] Luke xviii. 13 R.V.M.
[4] Luke iii. 16.
[5] Isa. xl. 13, 14.

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[1] Camb. Bible *in loco.*

But the answer of the Almighty to the young prophet's anxious question makes mention of a yet further judgment which is to take place during Isaiah's ministry; for, after telling how the inhabitants of the country will be "removed far away" so that there will be "a great vacancy in the midst of the land," the Almighty adds, "and if there be yet a tenth in it, it shall again be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof," *i.e.* a further judgment is to come on those who are left in the land; the Assyrian wild beast will yet again devour, till the Chosen People become like some stately terebinth or oak which has been felled so that the root only remains in the ground. As this second judgment on the nation is to happen under the ministry of Isaiah, it can only be referred to the invasion of Sennacherib, when a yet further depopulation took place. Sennacherib tells us that he took captive from Judah 200,150 persons, and there is good reason to think that his words are no mere exaggeration. When, then, we take into account that already in the days of Ahaz, and very soon after Isaiah received his commission, the little kingdom of Judah had suffered a grievous loss of population from invasion by Syria and by Edom,[2] we can see that the picture here given of the terrible woes about to come on a sinful nation is not overdrawn.

But though the stately tree of Jewish nationality is to be thus cut down, there lies in the Divine sentence the assurance of a restitution. Some trees, such as the conifers, when cut down cannot spring up again. Others admit of being regularly felled, and then allowed to grow up to the size required. "The oak," it is said, "after the trunk is felled, throws up shoots from the root stump more surely and more abundantly than most trees."[3] To this latter class of trees the Jewish nation is here likened. After its severe chastisements it will be like the stock of an oak left in the ground: not a dead stock, but a stock which contains within it a vital germinating power, ready to spring up into fresh life. The guarantee of this power of national revival is the remnant of true believers, spoken of as "a holy seed," some of whom, we may well suppose, will be the fruit of Isaiah's ministry. Here, then, is the one ray of hope that breaks through the dark cloud of coming judgment. On this promise of a believing remnant the prophet builds, and bestows on his son the name Shear-jashub, "a remnant shall return": return, that is, to God.[1] Thus cheered, he knows that his preaching will not be altogether in vain: the multitude may reject it, but individuals here and there will listen and repent. A small band of true "disciples"[2] will gather round him; and these shall form "a holy seed," the mainstay of the nation and its best hope for the future, for "a holy seed is the stock thereof."

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[1] Rassam Cylinder, col. vi. 99–106.

[2] 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 17.

[3] Enc. Brit., vol. xvii, p. 691, col. 2.

In concluding this study of the remarkable vision granted to Isaiah, may we not also venture to add that under the figure of the national tree cut down to the root and springing into life again, there is a typical foreshadowing of what is presently to happen to David's royal House, as foretold in chap. xi. 1, when from the hewn stump of Jesse springs up the Divine "Shoot," on whom the Spirit of Jehovah is to rest? That passage emboldens us, in something of a Pauline spirit, to give a Messianic turn to these closing words of the vision, "the holy seed is the stock thereof." "He saith not seeds, as of many; but as of one," and that Seed is Christ.[3]

NOTE

On the word *heykâl*, rendered "temple" in Isa. vi. 1.

The word *heykâl*, found in Assyro-Babylonian as well as in Hebrew, is a word borrowed from the old Sumerian *e-gal* "large house." Hence it stands for both "temple" and "palace," and is found in either of these senses in both those languages. But besides the signification "large house," like the English word "hall," it is also used to express the large room in a house, and is employed by the Assyrians to designate their halls of state. Thus Tiglathpileser tells us of his "halls" and the different names they bore, such as "Pleasures," "Holding Abundance," "King's Graciousness," etc.: while Sargon, describing his new palace at Dur-Sargon, mentions no fewer than eight of these "halls" named after the different materials used in their decoration, and it is not a little interesting in the plan of his palace found traced on a tile[4] to count exactly eight of these long rooms of state. The same use of the word appears in the architectural description of the temple at Jerusalem, given in 1 Kings vi. The Holy of Holies is there distinguished as the "oracle" *debhir*, the entrance as the "porch" *ulâm*, whilst the Holy Place as being the larger chamber forms the *heykâl* or "hall," the whole structure being spoken of as the *bayith* or "house." Had our revisers seen their way to translate *heykâl* throughout that passage by "hall" instead of "temple," it would have added very much to the clearness of the description. So then in Isa. vi. 1 the "temple" *heykâl* means the temple-hall, whilst the "house" *bayith* in verse 4 signifies the whole of the sacred structure.

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[1] Isa. x. 20–22. [2] Isa. viii. 16. [3] Gal. iii. 16.

[4] Perrot et Chipiez, *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, vol. ii, p. 426.

CHAPTER IV

AHAZ

"If ye have not *faith*, ye cannot have *staith*."—Isa. vii. 9. (Sir G. A. Smith's translation.)

It was pointed out at the close of the last chapter that when Isaiah received his commission the Almighty revealed to him a twofold judgment as about to fall upon his country: after the land has been laid waste and denuded of its inhabitants, it was "again" to be "eaten up." These two judgments I have referred to the sufferings inflicted first on Israel and then on Judah by the Assyrian power. The judgment inflicted on Israel, which led to the extinction of the Northern Kingdom, fell in two crushing blows: first, by the hand of Tiglathpileser, *ca.* 734 B.C., when the northern tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali, were carried captive; and then, by the hand of his son Shalmaneser in 722 B.C., when Samaria was captured by the Assyrians just at the beginning of the reign of Sargon. Isa. vii. 1–x. 4 is so closely connected with the eventful years 734 to 722, that it may be well at the risk of some repetition to go over the history of this period as made known to us by the Bible and the Assyrian monuments.

Tiglathpileser began his reign in 745 B.C. In the annals of his 8th year, 738 B.C., this king furnishes us with a list of tributaries, among whom we note *Menikhimme* (*makhazu*) *Samerina-ai*, "Menahem of Samaria," and *Ratṣunnu* (*matu*) *Gar-imēri-shu-ai*,[1] "Rezin of Damascus." This is in agreement with 2 Kings xv. 19, 20, where we are told that Menahem paid tribute to Pul—Tiglathpileser's other name—that his kingdom might be confirmed in his hand. In this list of tributaries, as already pointed out, only the kings of the North appear; Southern Palestine, led probably by Uzziah of Judah, remaining still independent.

During the years 737 to 735 B.C., while Tiglathpileser was engaged in expeditions to the east and north of Assyria, Damascus and Samaria seized the opportunity to revolt from the oppressive Assyrian power. Damascus was still under Rezin, but Samaria had experienced a change of dynasty. Pekahiah the son of Menahem had been assassinated by Pekah, aided by a band of Gileadites.[1] Meanwhile, in Judah Uzziah after a reign of unusual length had been succeeded by his son Jotham; and Jotham, after a very short reign, by his son Ahaz.[2] About the year 735 Syria and Israel, as stated in Isa. vii., formed a combination against Ahaz, probably because he refused to join them in an alliance against Assyria. This led Ahaz to appeal to Tiglathpileser for help. In the following year the Assyrian king responded to this appeal, and for three successive years engaged in campaigns in Syria and Palestine. According to the Eponym List, in 734 he went as far south as Philistia, and in the next two years was engaged in besieging Damascus. It thus appears that he dealt first with the Philistine foes of Ahaz, who, as we are told in 2 Chron. xxviii. 18, had invaded the cities of the Lowland and of the South of Judah, and then turned his arms against his rebellious vassal at Damascus. Between these two events, the invasion of Philistia and the capture of Damascus, we must place the carrying captive of the northern tribes and the subjugation of Samaria. Samaria, though subjugated, was not annexed. By, or at the instigation of the Assyrians, Pekah was slain and Hoshea put in his place. Passages from the inscriptions bearing on these events will find a place in the next chapter. At present I propose to confine myself to the action of Ahaz of Judah, and the disastrous result of his appeal to the Assyrian king.

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[1] The Assyrian name for Damascus.

As mentioned in the last chapter the Syro-Ephraimite war began before the death of Jotham; but shortly after the accession of his young son Ahaz it began to assume a more threatening character. Rezin and Pekah, uniting their forces, determined to attack Jerusalem, with the object not merely of capturing the city, but of overthrowing the Davidic dynasty—which had lasted now 2¾ centuries—and placing on the throne a nominee of their own, who would fall in with their designs and draw Judah into an alliance with them against Assyria. In Isa. vii. 1, 2 the sacred writer, after very briefly describing the course of the campaign, carries us back to the state of things at Jerusalem when the news arrived that the two kings had already united their forces on Israelitish territory. "And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria resteth on Ephraim,"[3] *i.e.* the Syrian army led by Rezin is already quartered in the land of Israel and may therefore very shortly be expected before Jerusalem. At this alarming news a universal panic overtook the king and his people: "his

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[1] 2 Kings xv. 25.

[2] See last chapter.

[3] Cf. R.V. margin.

heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind." But however alarming this news on its first arrival, the young king seems speedily to have recovered himself and to have made up his mind to offer a stout resistance. With this object, apparently, he went to a spot a short distance outside the walls of Jerusalem, "to the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field." Wherever we locate this spot, whether on the north, west, or south of the Sacred City, it must have been very close to the walls, being in fact the identical spot from which a generation later the Rabshakeh delivered his blasphemous harangue to the townsfolk.[1] The statement that Ahaz went to the end of the conduit running into the Upper Pool, is suggestive that, like Hezekiah when anticipating the invasion of Sennacherib, he was looking after the water supply of the city and taking measures to prevent the foe from using any fountains and springs outside the walls. While he was thus engaged, the prophet Isaiah, either carrying or leading his infant son Shear-jashub, advanced to meet him. As was shown in the last chapter, Isaiah received his call to the prophetic office in
736 ~~536~~ B.C., at the close of which year king Uzziah died. Jotham's
brief reign occupied the first part of ~~535~~; and now he too had 73
passed away and the youthful Ahaz was on the throne. Isaiah, unlike the prophet Amos, was no simple countryman. His home was in Jerusalem,[2] and he was probably sprung from good parentage and stood high in the social scale. Further, "he appears to have had easy access to the king."[3] In all probability he was well known to the godly Jotham, who had been for many years at the head of affairs: well known, too, to the "house of David," the royal family, and therefore to Ahaz. The account of his interview with the young king, given in chapter vii, argues a certain amount of familiarity. His infant son Shear-jashub was probably born shortly after the prophet's call, and received his significant name, "a remnant shall return," in consequence, apparently, of Jehovah's promise made on that occasion, that although two heavy judgments were to overtake the guilty nation, yet they would not be utterly destroyed: the tree of Jewish nationality was to be cut down, yet its root would be left in the ground and would spring up again into fresh life. All this was doubtless known to Jotham, and presumably to Ahaz also. For the fact of this knowledge on the part of Ahaz underlies Jehovah's command to the prophet to take his infant son with him. In the summer or early autumn of 735, when Rezin and Pekah were advancing

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[1] Isa. xxxvi. 2.

[2] "The Valley of Vision." Isa. xxii. 5.

[3] *International Critical Commentary.* Isaiah, p. lxx.

against Jerusalem and the city was thrown into a state of panic, Shear-jashub at the most could hardly have been more than a year old; and when we think what the taking this young child into the royal presence meant, we are inclined to believe that he was carried in his father's arms. For the prophet's appearing thus before the king was nothing less than an acted parable illustrating his own words, "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion."[1] Isaiah himself was for a sign as well as his infant child. The weakness of the child—as we may guess from the meaning of his name—portrayed the weakness of the remnant that was to return: the manly strength of the father portrayed the strong, tender, fatherly care exercised by Jehovah over that remnant. Similarly Moses, when reminding Israel of God's watchful care of them in the wilderness, uses the words, "the LORD thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son"[2]; whilst God, speaking by the mouth of Hosea, Isaiah's contemporary, says, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt, . . . I taught Ephraim to go, I took them on my arms."[3] Let the saved remnant, then, be ever so weak, ever so feeble, there is no need for all this panic, since "underneath are the everlasting arms."[4]

It thus appears that Isaiah's visit to Ahaz was intended to be of a friendly character, and the words of strong encouragement with which he was directed to greet the young king bear out this view. All the same, we find in his address a note of command and a note of warning. Ahaz, like many a youth, is wavering and undecided; exposed also to strong evil influences around him. He is therefore told that he must either do what Jehovah bids him or it will be the worse for him. "Take heed, and be quiet," cries the prophet, "fear not, neither let thine heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. Because Syria hath counselled evil against thee, Ephraim *also*, and the son of Remaliah, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel: thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall not stand neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin: and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, that it be not a people: and the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."[1] Ahaz must be calm and keep a steady head. Above all, he must exercise trust in the Lord Jehovah speaking to him by His prophet. However alarming the designs of his angry foes, the danger will soon be over: the two tails of these smoking firebrands will soon burn out. Jehovah will not allow their wicked intentions to take effect. The heads of Syria and Israel are after all only mortal: the latter a mere usurper, with no claim whatever to the throne. These two foes will soon disappear from the scene, and Ephraim, which is acting just now in an unbrotherly manner, will erelong cease to be a people.[2] All this was most encouraging for the young king; but added to the encouragement was the solemn warning, "if ye will not believe, ye shall not be established," where two Hebrew verbs coming from the same root have been so happily rendered in a rhyming translation by Sir G. A. Smith with the help of a North Country dialectic word, "If ye have not faith, ye cannot have staith." The *staith*, or continuance of Judah as an independent kingdom, is here made to depend on the faith of Ahaz and his people in their God. The prophet's message to Ahaz is very like his message to Judah in the days of Sennacherib: "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." And the answer to God's message on that occasion—"ye would not"—is very like what took place on the present occasion. Not, indeed, that we are told of any verbal reply made by Ahaz to the prophet. Perhaps this could hardly be expected under the circumstances, for the young king had not got his counsellors round him, and he would probably feel that he must consult them before making any answer. The probability is that he made no answer, for we read immediately after of a second appeal on the part of God: "And Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah." Ahaz, then, was required to make a venture of faith and to take a somewhat difficult course. Instead of forming any alliance against Syria and Ephraim, he was to let matters take their course, and place his sole trust in Judah's God. The young king was unable to do this at the moment, and he had given no indication of doing it since. The Almighty, however, graciously determined to give him a second opportunity of making a right choice at a time when his courtiers were round him and that he might not feel compelled to adhere to any previous decision come to by his council, he was invited by the prophet in their presence to ask of Jehovah a miraculous sign in attestation of the divine origin of the policy which he was called on to adopt. Isaiah assured him that he might ask whatever sign he liked, in the sky above or in Sheol beneath. To this Ahaz answers that he will not ask, neither will he tempt Jehovah: he will not put God to the test by asking for any such sign: *i.e.* he poses as a reverent believer in, and worshipper of Jehovah, at the very time when he is secretly resisting Jehovah's will and has already formed his own fixed plans. In fact he declines to ask for any sign, for fear on its being given the prophet should make good his challenge, and so block the way to his calling in the help of Assyria.

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[1] Isa. viii. 18.
[2] Deut. i. 31.
[3] Hos. xi. 1, 3.
[4] Deut. xxxiii. 27.

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[1] Isa. vii. 4–9.

[2] Instead of "threescore and five" we should probably read "fifteen": see Note 1 at the end of this chapter.

The hypocrisy of this answer of Ahaz arouses the prophet's righteous indignation. Addressing himself, not only to the young king, but to his counsellors and kinsfolk also—the unworthy representatives of David's royal line, none of whom were sufficiently unprejudiced to bid him accept the prophet's challenge—he tells them that they are not merely wearying the man who stands before them: they are wearying the God who has sent him. "Hear ye now, O house of David: is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also?" When first addressing Ahaz on this second occasion Isaiah had used the words "Jehovah, thy God." But Ahaz has secretly repudiated Jehovah; so now instead of "*thy* God" the prophet says "*my* God." Further, since Ahaz will not ask for a sign, will not bring matters to a test, the Almighty will act on His own account: "the Lord"—Adonai the Supreme Ruler—"himself shall give you a sign." A sign of what? A sign, as the succeeding context shows, first, of the speedy fulfilment of the prophet's earlier message, viz. the promised overthrow of Rezin and Pekah; and secondly, a sign of the evil days about to come on Ahaz and his people through the self-willed persistence of the king and his court in calling in the help of Assyria. All this is plain; but the nature of the sign given, at first sight strikes us as very strange and perplexing, and all the more so because our attention as believers in the Gospel Revelation has for long been drawn to the evangelic fulfilment of the words—"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." To us, these words speak of the greatest and most glorious miracle ever wrought: the miraculous conception and birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Ahaz, they could not possibly have borne any such meaning. So transcendent a miracle could not possibly have been imagined without a special revelation from heaven. Ahaz, we may feel sure, saw no promise of a miracle in the prophet's words, nor indeed anything out of the common. For the Hebrew word *almah*, rendered " virgin " in the A.V., means rather a young woman of marriageable age, a " maiden," and is so rendered in the R.V.[1] To Ahaz the words must have sounded a note of time rather than the prediction of a miracle. They seemed to signify that the young woman, at present unmarried, will be with child and bring forth a son, and before the child is old enough to know what he may eat and what he must not eat, the combined powers of Syria and Israel will be shattered, and so after a few short years the crisis will be over : " before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken." Whilst, then, to us the words speak of a glorious sign, given to us by " the Lord himself," a sign both in the height above and in the depth beneath, telling how the All-Holy One would unite in Himself two Natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, that so He might work out the plan of human redemption : to Ahaz, they could only have spoken of the overthrow of his much-dreaded foes at no distant date. But this overthrow, as the prophet now forewarns him, will not spell salvation for Judah but rather the reverse : " Jehovah shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah ; *even* the king of Assyria." At Jehovah's summons multitudinous armies, the bees of Assyria, the flies of far-off Ethiopia, will swarm into the land, and settling on the rocky bounds of the Judean valleys will devour everything. That " hired razor "—the Assyrian king—will put Judah to shame and make her bare. The Two Tribes, no less than the Ten, shall be depopulated : the land shall go out of cultivation : the vineyards on the mountain sides, the cornfields in the valleys, shall disappear. The ground, where not overgrown with thickets, will be turned to pasture, and the scanty population left will have to depend for their subsistence on the milk of their cattle and the honey of the wild bees.

But beside this warning of coming disaster the prophet strikes another warning note in the name to be given to the maiden's child—the name Immanuel. To us that name is full of happy thoughts : it is one on which we love to dwell as we join in the chorus of the well-known Christmas hymn :

> " Rejoice ! rejoice ! the Incarnate Word is come on earth to dwell ;
> No sweeter sound than this is heard—Immanuel."

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[1] See Note 2 at the end of this chapter.

But to Ahaz it could have had no such sweet sound. To him it was like a repetition of the threat contained in the change of "*thy* God" into "*my* God." Immanu-El, "With us is God": He is with us, and therefore He is not with you.[1] But it is quite possible that in the ears of Ahaz the name bore a yet further meaning. Ahaz, although he has professed to reverence Jehovah, is at heart a polytheist. He turns to many gods, and he turns from one god to another. We are told that shortly after this "he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria helped them. therefore will I sacrifice to them that they may help me."[2] But though he has lost faith in Jehovah the God of Israel, it is yet highly probable that he still believes in a Supreme God, "El." The Syrians certainly had such a belief. The obscure individual, whom it was proposed to set on the throne of David, bore the name Tabe-El, "God is good": compare the similar name Tab-Rimmon, "Rimmon is good." In Gen. xxv. 20 we read of Bethu-El, "the Syrian." Haza-El, "God sees," was the name of a king of Syria, and also, as the Assyrian inscriptions inform us, of a North Arabian king. Ashurnatsirpal speaks of meeting on the Middle Euphrates kings bearing such names as Khinti-El and Azi-El, and again, in the days of Tiglathpileser we hear of Ini-El king of Hamath. So then, whilst the name "With us is Jehovah" would not be likely to impress Ahaz, the name "With us is El" might very well do so. "With us is GOD," and "if God be for us who can be against us?" Thus is Ahaz told by the prophet that he has chosen the losing side. The Supreme God, whom his foes the Syrians recognise, is against him.

To purchase the help of that "hired razor," the king of Assyria, Ahaz was careful to send a costly present. He took, we are told, "the silver and the gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria."[3] In the same way a generation later Hezekiah, in the vain endeavour to get Sennacherib to withdraw his attack by paying the tribute demanded, "gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasures of the king's house," and cut off the gold from the very doors of the temple.[4] A parallel to the above is found in the inscriptions of Sennacherib, where the Babylonians, rebelling under Shuzub the Chaldean, are described as opening the treasure-house of E-Sagila, the temple of Bel at Babylon, and sending the gold and silver of Bel and Zerbanit as a bribe to the king of Elam to induce him to come to their aid.

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[1] In Prov. xxx. 1 we find the similar name Ithi-El, "With me is God."

[2] 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.

[3] 2 Kings xvi. 8.

[4] *Ibid.* xviii. 15, 16.

The king of Assyria must very readily have welcomed the appeal of Ahaz. It suited his purpose well to have the chief kingdom of Southern Palestine, a kingdom which stretched to the Egyptian frontier, a vassal kingdom of his empire. The next year, probably, saw his army on the march to the West. The very rumour of his coming must have broken up the siege of Jerusalem; and this must be the explanation of the brief statement in Isa. vii. 1 that Rezin and Pekah "went up to Jerusalem to war against it; but could not prevail against it," *i.e.* the town held out until the news came that the Assyrian king was marching to its relief. Thus in the first instance this move of Ahaz was successful. The Assyrian, as we shall presently see, speedily rid him of his foes, and the cloud, which looked so threatening, soon passed away. But Ahaz and his people must often have regretted that fatal step. The Chronicler is undoubtedly right when he states that the rich bribe sent by Ahaz to Tiglathpileser "helped him not";[1] for the truth of his statement is borne out by the persistence with which the states of Syria rebelled against the Assyrian power. Thus, kingdoms conquered by Tiglathpileser had to be reconquered by Sargon; whilst Judah, which became a vassal kingdom in the days of the former, is found to be disaffected in the days of the latter, and breaks out into rebellion under his son Sennacherib. There can be no doubt that Assyrian vassals had to pay heavily for the protection of the sovereign power. The "yoke" and the "burden," of which Isaiah speaks,[2] were dire realities. The Assyrian was forced to impose heavy taxes in order to get the wherewithal for the government of his wide empire. But in very deed he was more than a taxgatherer: he was a spoiler, a wild beast bent on filling "his caves with prey and his dens with ravin."[3] In his warlike campaigns he was out "to take the spoil and to take the prey,"[4] to rob the peoples of their treasures.[5] The royal inscriptions of Assyria under the Sargonids, no less than the scenes depicted on their bas-reliefs, bear witness to the truthfulness of the descriptions of the Hebrew prophets.[6] Ahaz, in the first instance, with difficulty raised the money required to purchase help from Assyria; but henceforth as a vassal king he was obliged to pay the yearly tribute, and this forced him to a further act of sacrilege. "Because of the king of Assyria," writes the Sacred Historian,[1] *i.e.* to enable him to raise the yearly tribute, he was compelled to cut off the ornamental " borders " or panels of the " bases " or laver-carriages made by Solomon, and to take down " the sea " from off the brazen oxen that were under it, as well as to remove the canopy over the king's seat in the temple.[2] That such works of art were highly valued by Assyrian kings, both as evidences of their wide empire and as suitable decorations for their palace-halls, we can guess alike from the scenes depicted on their bas-reliefs and the records contained in their inscriptions.[3]

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[1] 2 Chron. xxviii. 21.
[2] Isa. ix. 4, x. 27, xiv. 25.
[3] Nah. ii. 12.
[4] Isa. x. 6.
[5] Isa. x. 13.

[6] See Thureau-Dangin's *Huitième Campagne de Sargon*, containing a long inscription of that king, in which he gives a detailed account of the immense spoil taken by him from Mutsatsir, a small but wealthy kingdom dependent on the kingdom of Ararat.

At the close of Tiglathpileser's three years' campaign in the West and after the capture of Damascus by the Assyrians in 732 B.C., when " the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria " were about to be " carried away before the king of Assyria," [4] Ahaz along with other vassals was summoned to Damascus to meet his overlord.[5] An interesting list of the twenty or more tributaries, who appeared before him on that occasion, is given us by Tiglathpileser in the Tablet Inscription from Nimrud. On this list we note the following names: Ini-El of Hamath, Matten-Baal of Arvad, Sanibu of Beth-Ammon, Salamanu of Moab, Mitinti of Ashkelon, *Jehoahaz of Judah*,[6] Kaus-melech of Edom, Hanun of Gaza, etc. The above list is interesting, not only as illustrating the statement of 2 Kings xvi. 10, but as revealing to us the fact that the full name of Ahaz was Jehoahaz " Jehovah hath grasped," which, like Ahaziah—a name of similar import—appears among the royal names in the annals of both the Jewish kingdoms. But why is this king's name given in the Sacred Records in an abbreviated form ? It is, to be sure, a fact that such abbreviated forms were much in use. Thus we meet with an Ahaz a great-grandson of Jonathan.[7] Still, we should hardly have expected that a royal name would be thus treated without some further reason. Perhaps we may gain some light on the subject from Assyrian sources. Sennacherib in his inscriptions speaks of two kings, Nergal-ushezib and Mushezib-Marduk, who successively occupied the throne of Babylon. The former he calls " Shuzub of Babylon " : the latter " Shuzub the Chaldean." In this case the reason for thus abbreviating the names is clear, since for both of these men he entertained the bitterest hatred and contempt. He therefore refused to give them names in which the names of Nergal the war-god, and

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[1] 2 Kings xvi. 17, 18.

[2] So the *Speaker's Commentary* in loco.

[3] See the well-known bas-relief of the spoiling of Mutsatsir.

[4] Isa. viii. 4.

[5] 2 Kings xvi. 10.

[6] *Ya-u-ha-zi (matu) Ia-u-da-ai.*

[7] 1 Chron. viii. 34, 35.

Merodach the patron god of Babylon, formed elements. Similarly, the Sacred Writers will not give Ahaz his full name Jehoahaz because his shameful treatment of the worship of Jehovah shows him unworthy to bear a name of which the Sacred Name forms an element. For an opposite reason the Babylonian name given by Nebuchadnezzar to Daniel appears in Scripture in an abbreviated form. Since Belteshazzar means "protect his life," it is clearly an abbreviated name. The full name must have contained a prayer addressed to one of the gods of Babylon, such as "Bel protect his life."

While king Ahaz was at Damascus he saw there "the altar." "*The* altar," as given in the R.V., is correct, not "*an* altar" as in the A.V., but we naturally ask, What altar? and the first answer which suggests itself is, the altar of Rimmon the chief god of the Syrians. Now it is quite true that during the Syro-Ephraimite war Ahaz "sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which smote him,"[1] hoping thereby to secure the same help which he supposed to be given by them to his enemies. But after the Syrians were overthrown by Assyria it is hardly likely that he would go on doing this. To him the Syrian gods would now appear as conquered by Ashur, the national god of the Assyrians. Accordingly, just as he had turned in the first instance to the gods of Syria, so he now turns to Ashur who has shown himself stronger than Rimmon. Also, he has a further reason for doing this: he knows that it is politic, that it will please the Assyrian king and be looked upon as a pledge of his loyalty to his suzerain.

On his return to Jerusalem the Sacred Historian tells us of yet another act of sacrilege on the part of this wicked king. He coolly ordered the High Priest to remove the great brazen altar, which stood in front of the temple, to an obscure position, and to put the new altar, made after an Assyrian design, in its place. At the same time he enjoined on him that this new altar was to take the place of the old for all ordinary purposes. After reading how Ahaz denuded the temple treasury, marred its works of art dating from the age of Solomon, interfered with its architectural arrangements, and corrupted its worship, we are not surprised to learn from the Chronicler that his latest act was to shut up the sacred edifice altogether.[2] Thus for a while there was a complete cessation of the worship of Jehovah in His temple at Jerusalem: the daily sacrifices were no longer offered, the lamps were no longer lighted in the Holy Place, the perpetual incense was no longer burnt before the LORD. Verily, a king who could act thus was unworthy of the name Jehoahaz. To succeeding generations he must be merely "Ahaz"—a fragment of a name divorced from its original connection, speaking to future ages of one who sought for help from every god but the true God, and thereby prepared the way for his country's downfall. And if with regard to his first wrong step, it be pleaded for Ahaz that he did the only thing that could be done in appealing to Assyria, and that he was young, inexperienced, under woman's government, and overruled by a godless court, then, the answer is that he ought according to the prophet's advice to have done nothing in the way of forming an alliance with Assyria, but simply to have put his trust in Jehovah. And this, surely, he might very reasonably be called upon to do. For he must have known something of the history of his country; how it prospered or otherwise, according as Jehovah was honoured or disobeyed. He must have known, too, that the promise made to David concerning the continuance of his family for "a great while to come,"[1] had now been faithfully kept for 2¾ centuries; and that, while frequent rebellions and assassinations had happened in the sister kingdom, Judah for the most part had been spared such painful experiences. Even the plot of Athaliah to do away with the Davidic royal family had failed, though everything had seemed at the time to favour it. Then why should he fear this plot made by Syria and Ephraim to put an adventurer on the throne? Besides, had he not the examples of his father and grandfather, who "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD" and prospered accordingly? and was not a prophet of Jehovah at his side to strengthen him and to bid him ask a sign of "Jehovah thy God"? And yet, in spite of all this, he adopts a new and untried policy and flies right in the face of Isaiah's faithful warning. Then, when later he must have found out his mistake, instead of turning to Jehovah, he seems to have been filled with an innate dislike of the pure monotheistic religion of his forefathers; a dislike which showed itself positively in outrages committed on the temple and its worship, and negatively in the readiness with which he sought to worship any god rather than the true God. This dislike of Jehovah must have extended itself to His prophet, and I shall endeavour to show in the next chapter that it led to Isaiah's retiring for a while from Jerusalem into Galilee.

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[1] 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.

[2] 2 Chron. xxviii. 24.

NOTE 1

In Isa. vii. 8 it is foretold that within threescore and five years the existence of Ephraim as a separate kingdom will cease. This prophecy was uttered about the time when Ahaz was making his appeal to Assyria for help against the combined forces of Syria and Israel, viz. in 735 B.C.; and the Northern kingdom ceased to exist just *fifteen* years later when Samaria was captured by the Assyrians in 722. This leads us to look upon "threescore and five" as a corrupt reading, and to seek for some explanation. The probability is that some of the numerical discrepancies of Scripture are due to the fact that numbers were often expressed by letters of the Alphabet, and that at different stages in the history of the Alphabet, some letters closely resembled others. Thus the letter Samech, which stands for 60, at one time of its chequered career closely resembled the more conservative letter Yod, which stands for 10. Hence Samech-He, which stands for 60 plus 5, or 65, may very easily have been a corruption of Yod-He, which stands for 10 plus 5, or 15. A similar corrupt reading is found in Dan. v. 31, where Darius the Mede is said to have been about threescore and two years old. In this case Samech-Beth, which stands for 60 plus 2, or 62, is very probably a corruption of Yod-Beth, which stands for 10 plus 2, or 12. For the king who sat on the throne of Babylon during the greater part of the first year of Cyrus was his son Cambyses, whom we may identify with "Darius the Mede" of Scripture, since—as Ctesias tells us—Cambyses was the son of Amytis daughter of Astyages king of the Medes, whom Cyrus married after he had defeated the troops of Astyages and captured Ecbatana. As Ecbatana was captured about fourteen years before Cyrus took Babylon, Cambyses may very well have been about twelve years of age at the time of the latter event.[1]

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[1] 2 Sam. vii. 19.

NOTE 2

The Hebrew word *'almah* "young woman," rendered "virgin" in the R.V. and "maiden" in the R.V.M. of Isa. vii. 14, comes from a root meaning "to be mature," and points not so much to the virginity of the person intended as to her being of a marriageable age. The word occurs seven times in the Old Testament, and always of unmarried persons. See Gen. xxiv. 43, Ex. ii. 8, Ps. lxviii. 25, Prov. xxx. 19, Cant. i. 3, vi. 8, and the present passage. We may reverently believe that in Isa. vii. 14 the prophet, led by the Spirit, uttered an oracle, which in its primary sense involved no miracle, whilst at the same time it was couched in such language as to suit the miraculous conception and birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in which events it found its second and grander fulfilment.

[1] For further information on this point see my *In and Around the Book of Daniel.* S.P.C.K. 1923.

CHAPTER V

IMMANUEL

"Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil and choose the good."—ISA. vii. 15.

IN studying the Book of Isaiah, whether for our own benefit or to edify others, the question will often force itself upon us, Who was the typical Immanuel? and Who the maiden who typified the Virgin Mother? To this question the commentators furnish various answers. But not to bewilder my readers with endless discussions, I shall only lay before them that answer which commends itself most to my own judgment. It seems, then, to me that Immanuel was the prophet's own son, and that the maiden who became his mother was the prophet's second wife. Isaiah's first wife was the mother of Shear-jashub. When the prophet at Jehovah's command took Shear-jashub with him and went to meet Ahaz, his first wife was dead; for he predicts that within a year the nameless maiden, whom he intends to marry, will become the mother of Immanuel. After the birth of Immanuel this young woman, now the prophet's wife, is very suitably called "the prophetess," just as Solomon's wives are called "queens,"[1] and about a year later bears him a child, who is called Mahershalalhashbaz. The grounds for this opinion are as follows. In chap. viii. 18 the prophet says, "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs." He does not say that any other person's children are for signs: he only mentions his own.[2]

In what way Isaiah and Shear-jashub were signs when they appeared before king Ahaz in an acted parable we saw in our last chapter. It now remains to add that all three children, Shear-jashub, Immanuel, and Mahershalalhashbaz, were also signs in virtue of the names given to them. Thus the name Shear-jashub, "a remnant shall return," finds its explanation in chap. x. 20–22, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the Mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *only* a remnant of them shall return." This is a promise that a small fraction of the nation, who have escaped from the Assyrian deluge, shall no longer look for help to the power that smote them, but shall return in all sincerity to their Almighty Deliverer, the Holy One of Israel.

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[1] Cant. vi. 8.

[2] Both Isaiah and his son Immanuel were types of Christ. Isaiah typifies Christ as the "Everlasting Father" of His people. Compare Isa. viii. 18 with Heb. ii. 13.

The significance of the name Immanu-El, as we have already seen, lies in this, that God is WITH US, *i.e.* with those who put their trust in Him. So then, should the rising flood of Assyrian invasion overwhelm the Northern Kingdom, and sweep onward into Judah, reaching even unto the neck, yet the nation shall not go under, for the land thus submerged is "thy land, O Immanu-El." O With-us-God! "Make an uproar," then, "O ye peoples," that go to form Assyria's mighty host: mobilise your forces, arm yourselves for the conflict. It is all to no purpose: "ye shall be broken in pieces." Let the wisest of your military strategists take counsel together, and issue their commands to the troops under them: all shall be of no avail, your counsels "shall be brought to nought," your orders shall never take effect, for—Immanu-El "God is with us!" [1]

The name of the prophet's third child, Maher-shalal-hash-baz "Hasten booty, speed spoil," is explained by God immediately after the mention of his birth: "Call his name Mahershalalhash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria." [2]

But if these three children were all signs in virtue of the meaning of their names, there was one who was specially so called at the time when his birth was predicted and his name given. For when unbelieving Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, the prophet replied, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." [3]

The above considerations, then, may very well lead us to look on Immanuel as the prophet's own son, and to believe that Isaiah like Hosea had three children, all of whose names were prophetic.[4] But there is a yet further ground for looking on Immanuel as Isaiah's own son and as own brother to Mahershalalhashbaz. It lies in this, that notes of time couched in similar language were struck when the births of each of these children were announced: the first note indicating a longer interval, the second a shorter one, before the coming of the same event, viz. the downfall of Syria and Israel. Of Immanuel it was said, "For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken."[1] These words I have explained to mean, Before the child is old enough to know what he may eat and what he must not eat: an explanation which agrees with the previous context, where it is said that he will eat butter and honey when he knows to refuse the evil and choose the good. The note of time, therefore, in this instance signifies that within a very few years the land of the two allied kings of Syria and Israel will be desolated. As a matter of fact it was desolated within three years of the time when the sign was given. In the case of Mahershalalhashbaz the note of time begins with the same words, but points to a shorter interval: "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and, My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria." If the first mention of this child's name was made in 734 B.C., and his birth took place in the following year, then the above prediction, uttered at the time of his birth, was fulfilled within about a year of that event. Having regard, therefore, to these considerations, it seems most reasonable to look upon Immanuel as the older brother of Mahershalalhashbaz. But this being so, the "virgin," who became the mother of these two children, must have been Isaiah's second wife.

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[1] Isa. viii. 5–10.

[2] Isa. viii. 3, 4.

[3] Isa. vii. 14.

[4] Hos. i. 4, 6, 9.

If on the above grounds we are led to look upon the typical Immanuel as Isaiah's own son, a very interesting deduction follows: viz. that within a year or two of Immanuel's birth Isaiah must have left Jerusalem for a while and gone to live in the now desolated land of Israel. For it is predicted of Immanuel that when he is a young lad two principal articles of his diet will be butter and honey: chap. vii. 15. And then, a little further on in the same chapter, it is explained that this being obliged to depend on butter and honey, will be a consequence of the Assyrian invasion: that owing to the depopulation of the country, the land will go out of cultivation, and what is now vineyards and cornfields will become thickets; but that there will still be pasturage for cattle, and the wild bees will still lay up their honied stores, so that "butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the midst of the land." Now since this description of Immanuel's surroundings in his early boyhood's years does not apply to Judah and Jerusalem, but does apply to the land of Israel, and especially to northern Israel, the presumption is that Immanuel while still a young lad was taken by his father to live in the northern kingdom, and into that part of the kingdom whose inhabitants had so lately been carried captive.

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[1] Isa. vii. 16.

What was the reason for a prophet, whose heart was so centred in Jerusalem, leaving the Holy City and going to live in the desolated land of the Ten Tribes? In all probability it was the wrath of Ahaz. When Isaiah confronted Ahaz and bade him ask a sign of the LORD his God, the young king's evasive answer showed that he was afraid of the prophet; and as he listened to the terrible denunciations from the lips of Isaiah of the woes that were coming on his country because of the line of policy which he had secretly resolved to pursue, fear must have ripened into dislike and hatred. So then, comparing the antitype with the type, even as Herod sought to destroy the Divine Child whose birth might be supposed to endanger his throne, so Ahaz, from a different motive indeed, may have sought to destroy the typical Immanuel, the prediction concerning whose birth foretold the ruin of Judah at the hands of Assyria.[1] In this case it would not be long safe for the prophet and his son to remain in Jerusalem. But whither shall he go when he leaves the Sacred City? To Ahaz he has spoken of Syria and Israel as forming one land though under two kings.[2] This is because these two powers have for the time being made themselves into one: "Syria is confederate with Ephraim," literally "resteth on Ephraim." In the long-ago days "Ephraim departed from Judah"—to use the prophet's own words—and now her land is one with the Syrians. But the days of Ephraim's existence as a separate kingdom are soon to come to an end. Within a few short years Ephraim "will be broken in pieces that it be not a people."[3] And with this disappearance of the kingdom of Ephraim before his mind the prophet seems to have hailed the thought that the land occupied by the two Jewish kingdoms, so long divided politically, was by Divine intention, no less than by nature, one land. Hence, when telling how the flood of Assyrian invasion will sweep over both kingdoms, he speaks of the two countries, thus for a time submerged, as "thy land, O Immanuel," and Thine in all its "breadth."[4] If, then, our prophet must leave Judah, he need not leave Immanuel's land: he will go into that part of it which has just been placed under the rule of Hoshea,[5] and for greater safety he will go into that district which lies furthest off from the capital of king Ahaz: he will "withdraw into the parts of Galilee."[1] That Galilee, whose name is so endeared to us Christians, was then a deserted region, its inhabitants having been recently taken captive to Assyria. Their sad fate had fixed itself indelibly on the prophet's mind. Nevertheless, the Spirit had revealed to him that there, where the first blow had fallen, the bright light of happier days, the days of the Messiah, should first dawn. "For there shall be no gloom," he writes, "to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."[2] Many of the inhabitants of Galilee, as the previous context shows, had been "driven away into thick darkness"; the darkness of a hopeless captivity. The present population was scanty; but in the Messianic age, as the prophet foretells, Jehovah will "multiply the nation" and thus "increase the joy": a joy so great that it can only be compared to the rejoicing before God at the harvest festival,[3] or to the dividing of the spoil after some signal victory. For Assyria's oppressive "yoke" and heavy "burden" no longer rests on the nation: the taskmaster's "staff" no longer descends on its "shoulder."[4] The foe have been put to flight as on that day when the countless hosts of Midian fled before the sword of the LORD and of Gideon. They have vanished from the scene, and soon all the vestiges of hateful war shall vanish likewise. Those long-laced boots, in which the warriors of the enemy strode proudly amid the tumult,[5] their thick, close-fitting tunics, now dyed yet deeper with blood,[6] shall make fuel for the fire.[7] And the pledge of all this is before his eyes as he looks at his own Immanuel. Immanuel! the type, surely, of the long-promised Davidic King! "For unto us," he cries, "a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder"—his royal robe fastened at the shoulder marking him as the Divinely constituted Ruler—

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[1] Isa. vii. 17.
[2] Isa. vii. 16.
[3] See Note on Isa. vii. 8 at the end of the last chapter.
[4] Isa. viii. 8.
[5] Hoshea is spoken of by Tiglathpileser as his nominee.

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[1] Matt. ii. 22.

[2] Isa. ix. 1, 2.

[3] Cf. the invocation of Mati-ilu king of Arpad, 754 B.C.: "If Mati-ilu, his sons, his nobles, sin against the oaths to Ashur-nirari, king of Assyria, may his cultivators not sing in the fields the harvest song," etc.

[4] The language is figurative, but the scenes depicted on the bas-reliefs sufficiently explain the figures employed.

[5] The Hebrew *sĕ'ōn*, Assyrian *shēnu*, is the military boot, often pictured on the bas-reliefs as laced in front and reaching half-way up the calf of the leg.

[6] Nah. ii. 3.

[7] Cf. Ps. xlvi. 9, and Ezek. xxxix. 9.

"and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor," fount of all political wisdom and sagacity; "Mighty God," his people's all-powerful deliverer; "Everlasting Father,"[1] the father of his subjects, whose reign shall know no end; and then, last and best of all, because most desired in that sad day of domestic troubles and foreign invasion, "Prince of Peace": peace, internal no less than external: peace, the fruit of righteous rule and good government: peace, ever on the increase with his ever-extending sway. How fondly does the prophet dwell on this closing note! "Of the increase," he cries, "of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform this." The zeal of Jehovah, His jealousy for His people, ensures all. He is pledged to help them by this God-given name, Immanuel.

It will be seen from the above that we may reasonably suppose that the prophet Isaiah, leaving Judah because of the wrath of Ahaz, went with his son Immanuel into the land of Israel, and to that part of the land which was furthest off from Jerusalem, and to which his sympathies were so strongly drawn when he uttered his lament over the fate of Zebulun and Naphtali, and his glorious song of exultation over the bright future which awaited that now darkened region. Thus it was in Galilee that the early years of Immanuel must have been spent. And this may seem to point forward to our Saviour's peaceful home at Nazareth, just as His early ministry "by the way of the sea," *i.e.* the Sea of Galilee, and the coming of the bright Gospel Day is foretold, as St. Matthew assures us, in this very passage.[2]

The hint of a withdrawal into Galilee contained in the words which form the heading of this chapter, appears to have been lost on king Ahaz, or, if noticed by him, may possibly have been welcomed as giving some hope that he would soon be rid of this troublesome prophet. Fear and dislike were probably the predominating feelings in his breast. There was, therefore, no urgent haste for the prophet to leave Jerusalem at once. Accordingly, he was no doubt there at the time when Immanuel was born, and also a little later, when at Jehovah's command he wrote on a large metal tablet,[3] "with the pen of a man," *i.e.* with an ordinary graving-tool, but according to some translators "in ordinary characters," FOR MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ.[1] This was done in the presence of two witnesses, one of whom was "Uriah the priest," presumably the high priest:[2] the object being, as Cheyne points out, that when the prophecy involved in the name should be fulfilled, two men of rank would be able to testify to its genuineness. But may there not also have been a further object, viz. that the tablet might speak for the prophet in his absence? For though he still remained on at Jerusalem nearly a year longer until the birth of his third son, when the name written on the tablet was explained to mean that before the newborn child should be able to call its parents, the crisis, which began with the invasion of Judah by the armies of Syria and Israel, would end with the carrying off by the king of Assyria of the spoils of those two kingdoms; yet when that event took place he was gone, leaving behind him the tablet and the word of two reliable witnesses to vouch for the genuineness of the inscription and of the prophetic oracle enshrined in that long uncouth name.

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[1] When Nabonidus was made king of Babylon by his fellow-conspirators, they hailed him with the greeting, "Father of the land, who hast no equal!"

[2] Matt. iv. 12–16.

[3] The Hebrew word for "tablet," rendered "hand-mirrors" in chap. iii. 23, appears to mean a tablet of polished metal, such as the inscribed metal tablets found in the foundation stone of Sargon's palace at Khorsabad.

Agreeable, then, to this view of Isaiah's speedy departure from Jerusalem after the birth of Mahershalalhashbaz are the instructions which occur in chap. viii very shortly after the mention of that event: see verses 11 to 20. These instructions have about them the appearance of parting words of advice given by the teacher to his "disciples." He warns them against being seized with panic fears like the multitude around them. Their only fear must be a holy fear: the fear of Jehovah of hosts. They are to have nothing to do with necromancy. Should the nation leave their God, and resort for council to the dead? No! the law and the instruction, the teaching which they have received from his lips must be their guide. He also bids them take every care of his written oracles. Let them be bound up and sealed, that they may be preserved for future ages; for he has come to a pause, a break in his prophetic activities. "I will wait," he says, "for the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." He will wait until it shall please Jehovah to make further revelations to him. It may well have been, then, that as in the days of Ahab of Israel the prophet Elijah, acting on his own counsel, sought security by going outside Ahab's kingdom;

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[1] The length of the name seems strange to us moderns, but in Assyro-Babylonian, while names of three elements are very common, we sometimes meet with names made up of four or even five elements, such as Marduk-shapik-zer-mati, and Ashur-etil-ilani-mukin-apal; the latter a name conferred on a son of Esarhaddon when he was entrusted with the administration of Babylonia.

[2] 2 Kings xvi. 10.

so in the days of Ahaz of Judah, the prophet Isaiah, led by better guidance, sought for safety by withdrawing beyond the dominions of Ahaz.

In conclusion, let it be noted that just as the typical Virgin is merely mentioned afterwards as the "prophetess," *i.e.* the prophet's wife: whilst the typical Immanuel is introduced as inspiring the prophet with hope even when he sees in vision Assyria's vast hosts mustering for the conflict, and again when he beholds the Assyrian deluge poured out over the land;[1] so, in the Gospel Story, there is a wonderful withdrawing from our view of the Blessed Virgin that our gaze may be fixed on her Son, who is to His people, not only *El Gibbor* "the Mighty God,"[2] but also *Immanu-El* "God with us."

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[1] Isa. viii. 8.

[2] Isa. ix. 6 and x. 21.

CHAPTER VI

FALL OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

"Is not Samaria as Damascus?"—Isa. x. 9.

THERE are certain stepping-stones which help the historian as he crosses the full stream of prophecy which flows through that portion of the Book of Isaiah at which we are now looking. One of these we have found in the prediction concerning the speedy spoiling of Damascus and Samaria given in chap. viii. 3, 4. Two others, which have a special bearing on the subject of this chapter, will be found in chaps. ix. 10 and x. 9, 11. In the former passage the inhabitants of Samaria are represented as saying, "The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars": *i.e.* "We have suffered a grave reverse, but we mean to have a second try; and this time we shall do better than before." In the latter passage the prophet puts into the lips of the Assyrian king the words, "Is not Samaria as Damascus? . . . Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?" words which show that Samaria had fallen at the time when they were spoken, and that the proud conqueror was seriously contemplating the conquest of the Southern Kingdom. These three passages with the help of the Second Book of Kings enable us in the light shed by the Assyrian records to find our historic footing as follows. First, the spoiling of Damascus and Samaria, foretold in Isa. viii. 4 as near at hand, must have taken place upon the fall of Damascus in 732 B.C., at the close of Tiglathpileser's three years' campaign in the West. Secondly, the resolve of the inhabitants of Samaria to make a second stand against Assyria, as pictured in Isa. ix. 9, 10, must be put subsequent to the spoiling of Samaria in 732. Indeed, such a resolve can hardly have been formed during the reign of Tiglathpileser, but was no doubt made on or after the accession of his son Shalmaneser in 727 B.C., for it took effect during the last years of that monarch's reign, and resulted in a three years' siege of Samaria, 724-722. Samaria fell into the hands of the Assyrians just at the beginning of the reign of Sargon (722–705), so that our last stepping-stone lands us in that reign, and probably near its commencement, when circumstances had happened, which, as we shall presently see, might well tempt Judah to think of revolt. Shortly afterwards things went well for the new monarch, and it would be natural for him then—as indicated in Isa. x. 11—to plan the conquest and annexation of Judah, that so he might mete out to her the same measure which had already been meted out to Samaria.

As we saw in our last chapter, Samaria and Damascus were so firmly bound together in their league against Judah that Isaiah in chap. vii. 16 speaks of them to king Ahaz as forming one land. This, however, was not their normal condition. They were in fact rival kingdoms, so that when one was up the other was down, and *vice versâ*. The kingdom of Samaria, if it had its origin in the rebellion of Jeroboam, yet as regards the site of its capital may be said to date from the reign of Omri. It was Omri who bought the hill of Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and who "fortified the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer the owner of the hill, Samaria."[1] Hence the Assyrian inscriptions with one exception, at which we shall presently glance, call the kingdom of the Ten Tribes Beth-Omri, "the House of Omri," or simply "Omri." They also look upon Omri as the father of the Israelite royal house, so that even Jehu is called on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III[2] *Ya-u-a apal Khu-um-ri-i* "Jehu the son of Omri."

The site of the town of Samaria is one of exceeding beauty. It stands on a very large isolated hill, which rises by successive terraces some 350, or, according to another writer, 600 feet above the surrounding valleys. This hill, which commands a view of the Mediterranean 20 miles distant, is oval in shape, and the smaller and lower end unites it to the neighbouring mountain on the east. As in the case of Jerusalem, the mountains are round about Samaria. The site was no doubt chosen not so much for its beauty as for the strength of its position and the ample space on the summit of the hill. Regarded strategically it had one drawback. The hill, or "mountain of Samaria,"[3] had no fountain; so that during a siege the inhabitants must have been entirely dependent on their cisterns. The terraced sides of the hill are at present covered with olive orchards, fig-trees, and pomegranates. No doubt in Biblical times they were clad in the same manner, with the addition of vineyards. But above the foliage there must have risen in Isaiah's day that crown of towers, which the prophet likens to the fading wreath on the head of Ephraimite revellers: "the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim," "the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are overcome with wine." [1]

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[1] 1 Kings xvi. 24.

[2] Now in the British Museum.

[3] Amos iv. 1.

Very different as regards site are Samaria and Damascus. Each offers an enchanting picture, but with entirely different features. The one must have stood out boldly on its lofty hill encircled by the neighbouring heights. The other lies low near the edge of a vast oasis, which fades away into the eastern desert; while on the western side it is overlooked by the bold peak of Hermon, that "tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus." [2] The view of Damascus from the crest of Antilebanon is described as scarcely surpassed in the world. Damascus, unlike Samaria, has a most abundant supply of water in the Abana and Pharpar—the modern Barada and Awaj— those "rivers of Damascus" of which Naaman was so justly proud.[3] The former flows through the city in a deep rapid current averaging 50 feet wide. It is to these waters and the large oasis fertilised by them that the site is due. There must have been human habitations here from time immemorial; so that we are not surprised to find in Damascus one of the oldest cities in the world, compared to which Samaria was of mere mushroom growth. Damascus was standing in the days of Abraham, and doubtless long before. It is mentioned in the list of towns in Syria conquered by Thothmes III of Egypt in the fifteenth century B.C., and figures somewhat later on the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. But whatever may have been the earlier history of this ancient city, the kingdom of Syria-Damascus, as we know it from the Biblical and Assyrian records, dates from the time of Solomon. When David conquered Hadadezer king of Zobah, a certain Rezin, a former captain of Hadadezer, gathered a band of men and established himself as king in Damascus, where he became a thorn in the side of Solomon.[4] In Isaiah's day a second Rezin was reigning in Damascus, the gap between these two monarchs being filled by kings, some of whose names and doings have come down to us; such as Ben-Hadad I, with whom Asa made a league against Baasha of Israel; Ben-Hadad II, who warred with Ahab, and Hazael, who assassinated him and seized his throne. Then followed a third Ben-Hadad, who is known to us from an ancient Aramaic inscription.

As stated above, Syria and Israel were rival powers, but the approach of a still mightier foe sometimes led them to combine. Thus in 854 B.C., at the battle of Qarqar on the Orontes 20 miles north of Hamath, when Israel first came into contact with Assyria, a combination of twelve kings, led by Dadda-Idri[1] of Damascus and including Irkhulini of Hamath and *A-kha-ab-bu (matu) Sir-'-la-ai* "Ahab of Israel," met and were defeated by the troops of Shalmaneser III. The victory of the Assyrians at Qarqar seems to have been indecisive, for again in 849 the same allied forces sustained a second defeat. A third encounter took place in 846. On this occasion the Assyrian army numbered no less than 120,000 men. The allies are described as overthrown, but no tribute followed. In 842, when Ben-Hadad II had been overthrown by Hazael and the house of Omri by Jehu, the Syrian king, who had taken up a strong position on the peak of Saniru—the Biblical Senir[2]—was defeated by Shalmaneser, and driven back to Damascus. On this occasion the groves of Damascus were cut down and the neighbouring country ravaged as far as the Hauran, but the Assyrians were not able to capture the city. Assyria had in fact met with a check at the hands of Syria. It was just after this struggle that Jehu paid tribute to the Assyrian monarch, as recorded and depicted on the Black Obelisk. Having thus withstood the arms of her mighty foe, Syria now waxed strong, and Israel was in consequence depressed, as may be gathered from 2 Kings xiii. 3, 7. But, as predicted by the prophet Elisha on his deathbed, the tide turned during the reign of Joash. "The Lord gave Israel a saviour," as the parenthesis in 2 Kings xiii. 5, 6 informs us. This "saviour," or deliverer, who delivered Israel from the Syrian power, is believed to have been Adad-nirari III of Assyria,[3] who in 803 B.C. attacked Mari' who had supplanted Ben-Hadad III, captured Damascus, and received from the Syrian king a heavy tribute. With this depression of its rival the kingdom of Israel became strong under Jeroboam II. The Assyrians were again at Damascus in 773 in the reign of Shalmaneser IV, but no record has been left us of this campaign. After this, owing to the weakening of the Assyrian power at the hands of the kings of Ararat and through internal dissensions, Syria was left alone for awhile. Being thus relieved from the pressure of the Assyrian power, the old spirit of bitter rivalry began again to show itself in the treatment meted out by Syria to the neighbouring kingdom of Israel, so that Amos was led to testify, "Thus saith Jehovah: for three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron: but I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, and it shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad. And I will break the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the House of Eden, and the people of Syria shall go into captivity to Kir."[1] This prophecy, as we learn from 2 Kings xvi. 9, was now about to be fulfilled by the attack of Tiglathpileser on Syria in answer to the appeal of Ahaz for help against his enemies. For the persistence of Assyria in her attack on Arpad during the four successive years 743 to 740 had made it manifest that her design was to conquer both Syria and Palestine. Still there remained the hope that a coalition with Syria at the head might arrest the progress of the Assyrian power, as it had done so successfully only a century before. The conjecture, then, is not improbable that Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel turned their arms against Ahaz because he refused to join such a coalition. However, with regard to our prophet, it was not at all the counsel of Isaiah that Ahaz should either side with or resist Assyria, but simply that he should put his trust in Jehovah.

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[1] Isa. xxviii. 1.

[2] Cant. vii. 4.

[3] 2 Kings v. 12.

[4] 1 Kings xi. 23–25.

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[1] *I.e.* Hadadezer or Ben-Hadad II.

[2] Deut. iii. 9, Cant. iv. 8.

[3] His name was formerly written Ramman-nirari.

When Tiglathpileser in 734 B.C. came to the help of Ahaz, he advanced by the easiest route, viz. by the Mediterranean coast, along the foot of Lebanon through Zemar and Arka.[2] Then, turning inland near Tyre, he ravaged the beautiful district between the Litany and the Upper Jordan; Ijon—a name which still survives in the *Merj Aiyun* or "Meadow of Ijon," a plain some six miles long by two broad; Abel of Beth-Maacah, where Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, vainly strove to raise the standard of rebellion against king David;[3] Janoah, the site of which is still unknown; Kedesh, the home of Barak, and one of the six cities of refuge, sometimes called Kedesh-Naphtali, the site of which is marked by the modern *Kudes* on the marshy plain of Zaanaim, an elevated platform on the hills to the N.W. of Lake Huleh, the Biblical "waters of Merom;[4] Hazor, the leading city-state of northern Canaan, which comes again into prominence in the days of the Judges;[5] Gilead, Heb. "*the* Gilead," not Gilead beyond Jordan, but a small district with a city of the same name; and Galilee, Heb. *the Gâlil* or "circuit," a district according to Jos. xx. 7 in the hill country of Naphtali and near the Phoenician border, in which Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities: see 1 Kings ix. 11. These conquests in northern Israel are found commemorated by Tiglathpileser in a much-obliterated fragment of his annals, which runs thus:

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[1] Amos i. 3–5. The valley or *biq'âh* of Aven, still called the Buqa'ah, is the long and beautiful valley of Coele-Syria between the Lebanon and Anti-lebanon in which Baalbek stands. It was formerly crowded with temples, and is therefore styled by Amos "the valley of Aven," *i.e.* of vanity. "The House of Eden," or Beth-Eden, is the Bit-Adini of the Assyrian inscriptions. It was a Syrian state lying on either side of the middle Euphrates. Kir, the original home of the Syrians, has not yet been located.

[2] Gen. x. 17, 18.

[3] 2 Sam. xx. 14–22.

[4] Jud. iv. 6, 11, Jos. xx. 7 and xi. 5.

[5] Jos. xi. 1, and Jud. iv. 2.

> . . . . "the town of Ga-al [–ad] (Gilead).[1] . . . A – bi – il[2] . . . which were on the border of the land of Beth-Omri . . . the broad, I turned in its entire extent into the territory of Assyria. My officers, the viceroys, I set over them. Hanun of Gaza, who took to flight before my troops, made away to Egypt. Gaza [I captured] . . . his possessions, his gods . . . [I carried away] . . . my . . . and my effigy I erected . . . in the midst of Beth. . . . The gods of their land I counted [as plunder]. . . . like birds . . . I restored him to his land, and . . . gold, silver, variegated garments wool (?) . . . great . . . I received. The land Beth-Omri . . . the whole of its inhabitants and their goods I carried away to Assyria. Pekah,[3] their king I slew. Hoshea[4] I appointed [to the sovereignty] over them. Ten talents of gold, a thousand talents of silver, together with their . . . I received from them and brought them away [to Assyria]."

The above extract shows that from northern Israel the Assyrian king marched south to Philistia to punish the Philistine foes of Ahaz.[5] Hence the expedition for the year 734 B.C. is described on the Eponym List as "to Philistia."[6] We also gather that Hoshea was regarded by Tiglathpileser as a vassal king, and as his nominee. Further, if we allow ourselves to be guided by the words still legible, the above extract contains an amusing contradiction. The words no doubt mean that Tiglathpileser carried out the deportation of the inhabitants of the northern districts of Israel after his usual wholesale fashion, while both policy and necessity required that a considerable fraction of the population should still be left in the land under Hoshea.

Most pathetic is the picture which Isaiah gives us of the northern tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali, being driven away into captivity. "They shall pass through it," their own lovely land, "hardly bestead," roughly dealt with as pictured on the bas-reliefs, "and hungry," suffering the famine caused by war: "and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God,[7] and turn their faces upward: and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness *they shall be* driven away."[1] A more hopeless scene than this vision of a captive train, for whom there is "no morning,"[2] no prospect of ever returning to the Lord's land and to their homes, it is impossible to imagine. Yet, where the darkness broods deepest on that land of the shadow of death, the prophet sees a heavenly light breaking. "For there shall be no gloom," he cries, "to her that was in anguish. In the former time" of that sad captivity, "he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time," the time of the expected Messianic King here beheld in vision, "hath he made it glorious, by the Way of the Sea, Beyond-Jordan, the *Gâlîl* of the Nations." Here are three geographical names, denoting a more extensive tract than the Zebulun and Naphtali of the former clause. "The Way of the Sea" is the district on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, through which ran the caravan road from Damascus to the Mediterranean. The Crusaders called this road Via Maris, but the Sea here meant is not the Mediterranean but the Sea of Galilee, called in the Book of Joshua "the Sea of Chinneroth."[3] "Beyond-Jordan" denotes the country on the east side of the Jordan in its upper course, viz. the district bordering on the Syrian frontier. "The *Galil* (or 'circuit') of Nations" signifies a larger Galilee than that which lay immediately around Kedesh-Naphtali, inasmuch as it probably embraces both of the previous terms and denotes the whole northern frontier of the land of the Ten Tribes. In this wide district the population was very mixed, being composed of Phoenicians, Jews, Hittites, and Syrians, which accounts for its being called "the Circuit of the Nations."[4] It is this extensive region, of which the Sea of Galilee is the centre, that forms the scene of the prophet's glorious vision: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, on them hath the light shined." Now it is worthy of notice that St. Luke, when about to describe the dawn of the Gospel Day, refers us to the same extensive district in his mention of Galilee, Ituraea, Trachonitis, and Abilene in addition to Judaea:[5] while St. Matthew points out the Evangelic fulfilment of the prophecy, when for a brief season Capernaum, exalted to heaven by Christ's presence in her midst as well as by His teaching and miracles, became a bright centre of light to the districts around.[6] Further, we note that it was in these same regions that our Saviour gave some gracious indications that the light which He brought into the world was intended to be a light to lighten the Gentiles as well as the Jews, when on the Phoenician border He listened to the cry of the woman of Canaan;[1] and again, when on the other side of the Sea of Galilee He set free the poor demoniac who went forth to publish in heathen Decapolis "how great things Jesus had done for him."[2]

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[1] See 2 Kings xv. 29.

[2] Abel-beth-maacah.

[3] *Pa-qa-ha.*

[4] *A-u-si-'.*

[5] 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.

[6] See Chapter II, p. 18.

[7] Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 43.

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[1] Isa. viii. 21, 22.
[2] Isa. viii. 20.
[3] Jos. xii. 3, xiii. 27.
[4] 1 Macc. v. 15.
[5] Luke iii. 1.
[6] Mat. iv. 14–16.

As the campaign of 734 B.C. swept onwards into Philistia, a revolution seems to have taken place in Samaria. The Assyrian party, we may suppose, got the upper hand; Pekah was assassinated by Hoshea, and the usurper had his claim confirmed by Tiglathpileser. In this way we may reconcile the statement of the Assyrian king, that he slew Pekah and put Hoshea in his place, with the record in 2 Kings xv. 30, that "Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead."

The next two years, as the Eponym List informs us, were devoted to expeditions to Damascus. This city must have made a stout resistance. As Rezin was a rebellious vassal, he may well have felt that his only hope lay in a life-and-death struggle. Syria had baffled and arrested the advance of the proud foe in the middle of the previous century: then why not now? But as one of "the two tails of smoking firebrands" had burnt itself out, so the other was destined soon to be quenched. An account of the fall of Damascus, as given by Tiglathpileser in his sadly obliterated annals, reads thus:

> .... "He [viz. Rezin] to save his life, fled away by himself ...
>
> .... The gate of his city I entered. His superior officers alive [I took].
>
> [Their corpses] I impaled: I subjugated his land. 45 soldiers of the baggage, 655 ...
>
> .... of his city I took for myself. Like a bird in a cage I shut him in. 13,520 of his orchards
>
> .... his numberless plantations I cut down: I left not one. Together with their property ...
>
> .... Khadara, the house of the father of Rezin of Gar-Imērishu [=Syria–Damascus] on inaccessible mountains [situated]" ...

After this follows a list of captured cities with the spoils taken from them, ending with the words:

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[1] Matt. xv. 21–28.

[2] Mark v. 20.

. . . . "[I] who like a flood-mound left behind me[1] 16 districts of the land of Gar-Imērishu" . . .

It appears from the above that a battle was fought near Damascus, in which Rezin was totally defeated and only saved his life by flight: and that Tiglathpileser then entered the city and caused the rebel generals to be impaled after the manner shown on his bas-reliefs. The extensive groves and gardens round the city next engaged his attention, and these met with the same ruthless treatment as they had suffered at the hands of Adad-nirari in the previous century. The towns of Syria-Damascus were then taken and spoiled, their inhabitants led captive, and the surrounding country devastated far and wide. Rezin himself appears to have sought refuge in some stronghold, in which he was closely besieged. That he ultimately met with his death at the hands of the conqueror, as stated in 2 Kings xvi. 9, was found by Rawlinson recorded on a tablet left behind in Asia and since unhappily lost.

The fall of Damascus and the ravaging of her territory, described on the above inscription, are foretold in Isa. xvii. 1–3. Damascus, so the prophet declares, will become a "ruinous heap," and her cities will lie forsaken. Then, with the passing of the kingdom of Damascus, Ephraim will lose her "fortress," for the Syrian kingdom, in virtue of its strength as well as of its geographical position, has formed a bulwark for Israel against Assyria. Lastly, at the close of this short "burden" it is added that "the remnant of Syria shall be as the glory of the children of Israel" (R.V.M.), which probably means that Syria-Damascus shall share the same fate which Israel has so lately experienced, viz. the fate of captivity; for it is the population of a country that forms its glory, and Jacob's glory, as the succeeding context foretells, "shall be made thin"—a simile taken from a lean ill-conditioned beast. He will be like a lately reaped harvest field, in which, according to Eastern practice, the stalks have been left standing after the heads have been cut off: or, again, as a fruitful olive tree, on which, after the crop has been shaken and beaten down, a few olives still remain on the outmost branches, to be reached only by a long stick.[2] Thenceforward, taught by bitter experience, Jacob shall look to his Maker only. The idol altars—the work of his own hands—the *ashērim*, or sacred poles, standing by them, as seen on the bas-reliefs, and the sun-pillars, shall no longer have any attraction for him. He has seen and rued the consequences of idolatry—his strong cities lying desolate like the ruined fortresses of the Amorites and Hittites which his fathers captured. For Israel has forgotten the God of his salvation, and has not been mindful of the Rock of his strength: he has been planting "pleasant plants," or rather "plantings of Adonis" (R.V.M.), and setting them with "strange slips." The reference here is to the "strange" *i.e.* the foreign cult of the Syrian god Adonis,[1] introduced into Israel in consequence of her firm alliance with Syria. In the Greek writers we find mention made of "Adonis Gardens." They were pots of quickly-withering flowers, which the ancients used to set at their doors or in the courts of their temples. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, 276 B, Socrates is represented as saying "Would a husbandman of any intelligence take seeds which he cared for and wished to bear fruit, and in sober seriousness plant them during the heat of summer in gardens of Adonis, and then rejoice as he watched them coming up in full beauty' ere they had been eight days sown?" Even so will it be with this new cult. Though "hedged in," *i.e.* under State protection, it is destined, like the Adonis Gardens, after a brief bright blossoming, to speedily wither away. For "the harvest," cries the prophet, *i.e.* the hoped-for result of the alliance, "fleeth away in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow."

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[1] Compare Scott's lines on Flodden:

"and from the charge they drew,
As mountain wave from wasted land rolls back to ocean blue."

[2] See Thomson's *The Land and the Book*, p. 56.

The above prophecy not only serves to show how closely Syria and Israel for a short time were bound together,[2] but it also contains an implicit prediction that though Israel will be reduced in population and "made thin," yet the fall of the kingdom of Damascus, which acts as the "fortress" of Ephraim, will anticipate the fall of the kingdom of Israel, inasmuch as Ephraim remains after her "fortress" has been removed. This was realised in the event. Damascus fell in 732, but Ephraim, owing to the revolution in Samaria and the elevation of a new king approved by Assyria, continued for ten years longer. This point is worthy of notice, since some have imagined that Isaiah expected both cities to fall at the same time. What he did expect was that they would both very shortly be spoiled, and this happened during the years 734–732.

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[1] *Na'aman*, "pleasantness," appears to have been a name in Syria for the deity known to the Greeks as Adonis and to the Hebrews as Tammuz, and it will be recalled that this was the name of Syria's famous general who came to Elisha to be healed of his leprosy. In Arabic the scarlet anemone is called the "wound of Na'aman," *i.e.* of Adonis; since according to the well-known myth the god, after being killed by a wild boar when out hunting, was changed by Venus into the anemone, that so the name of the flower along with its deep red colour might for ever commemorate her lover and his tragic fate.

[2] Cf. Isa. vii. 16, where Syria and Israel are spoken of as forming one land.

In 1 Chron. v. 6, 26 Tiglathpileser is said to have carried captive the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan. He may very well have done this during the two years when he was besieging Damascus, though he has left no record of it. Under these circumstances it is evident that the kingdom of the Ten Tribes under Hoshea must have been very seriously reduced and weakened, since many of its inhabitants on either side Jordan had been carried into captivity, whilst some of the northern districts had been placed under Assyrian governors. Yet, so intense was the dislike of this oppressive power, that the very earliest opportunity of casting off her yoke was always eagerly welcomed. Such an opportunity soon presented itself during the short reign of Shalmaneser V (727–722), who succeeded his father Tiglathpileser on the throne of Assyria. Though this king has left us no record of his doings, yet we have no reason to think that he was deficient in warlike activity. During the three last years of his reign we learn from the Eponym List that expeditions were made every year; and though the names of the countries have been obliterated, yet the Tyrian annals and the Scripture record help us to fill in the blank. The former state that he overran Phoenicia and made an ineffectual attempt to capture the Island-Tyre: the Bible states that he was engaged for three years in the siege of Samaria.[1]

Hoshea, the last king of Israel, mounted the throne in 732 B.C. According to the Scriptures he was an Assyrian tributary, and this is confirmed by the inscription of Tiglathpileser quoted above. During the earlier years of his reign he paid his tribute regularly, but presently withheld it. What was the cause of this change of policy? In all likelihood the death of Tiglathpileser and the accession of a new monarch, Shalmaneser V. Every change of ruler was looked upon by the subject states as a good opportunity for breaking loose from Assyrian thraldom. Tiglathpileser died in the winter of 727, in our January, some two months or so before the close of the Assyrian year. The following year was spent by Shalmaneser at home. Then, in the next year, 725 B.C., he started on a warlike expedition, probably against Tyre, intending most likely to deal with Israel at the same time. This at once brought the Israelite king to his senses, so that, as related in 2 Kings xvii. 3, he renewed his fealty and again paid tribute, no doubt a heavier tribute than before, as a penalty for his rebellious folly. But he had hardly done this when he was again caught hatching plots of rebellion against his suzerain the king of Assyria.

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[1] 2 Kings xvii. 5, 6, xviii. 9, 10.

Two things may have encouraged him to do this. First, the intelligence that his near neighbours the Tyrians, despite the fact that their country had just been overrun by the troops of Assyria, were bracing themselves for a further life-and-death struggle with the foe ; secondly, the sight of the fast-rising power of Ethiopia-Egypt, as evidenced by the victorious career of Pionkhi the Ethiopian in Lower Egypt.

According to 2 Kings xvii. 4, Hoshea "sent messengers to So king of Egypt." This "So," or rather "Sěvě," for the Hebrew characters can be thus read by a mere change of vowel points, is undoubtedly the Sib'i of the Assyrian records, who a few years later in 720 B.C., when Sargon defeated the Egyptians at Raphia, is styled in the inscriptions of that king the *turtanu* or commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army. There is good reason for thinking that Sib'i was an Ethiopian, acting under Pionkhi ;[1] that he was indeed none other than Shabaka the Ethiopian, who five years later became king of Ethiopia-Egypt and was recognised as the first monarch of the XXVth, or Ethiopian Dynasty.[2]

The fall of Samaria took place very early in the reign of Sargon, if indeed it should not be credited to his predecessor, seeing that in his earlier inscriptions Sargon says nothing about it, whilst in 2 Kings xvii. 3–6 it appears to be ascribed to Shalmaneser, though this is not precisely stated in so many words.[3] The later inscriptions of Sargon place the capture of the city in his *rish sharruti*, *i.e.* the short period between his accession at the end of December and the beginning of the New Year early in April. But, as Olmstead remarks, this was a most unlikely time of the year for warlike operations.[4] In the Triumphal Inscription from Khorsabad the capture of the city is thus recorded : "The city of Samaria I besieged and captured. 27,280 of its inhabitants I carried away. 50 chariots from among them I took (for myself) : their remaining effects I caused to be seized. My viceroy I set over them, and the tribute of the former king I imposed on them." A similar account in the annals, very much obliterated, furnishes the additional particular that Sargon settled captives from other places in Samaria.

The last days of the kingdom of Israel are foretold with great power and pathos in the oracles of the prophet Hosea. In chap. v. 13 we have a reference to the fatal policy of Menahem of Israel, copied later by Ahaz of Judah : "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to Assyria, and sent to king Jareb"—king Pick-quarrel, a nickname no doubt for Tiglathpileser—"but he is not able to heal you, neither shall he cure you of your wound." In chap. viii. 9 a striking simile pictures to us the wayward wantonness of Ephraim: "They are gone up to Assyria," *i.e.* as suppliants approaching some mightier power, "like a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers," or "given love-gifts." Then in the next verse it is added, "Yea, though they hire among the nations," though they purchase foreign help, "now will I gather them"—gather them into captivity, as was done through Tiglathpileser even before the end of the monarchy—"and they begin to be minished by reason of the burden of the king of princes," to wit, the heavy tribute imposed upon them by the Assyrian king. Again, in chap. vii. 11, 12, how vividly does the prophet portray in aptest similes the blind fluctuating policy of the Northern Kingdom during those last eventful years: "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they shall go," adds the Almighty, "I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven."[1] Finally, the calf images, set up by the first Jeroboam, Israel's earliest sin, are pictured as becoming ultimately a source of anxiety to their worshippers. For when the stern invader is in the land, "the inhabitants of Samaria shall be in terror for the calves of Beth-aven":[2] and well they may be, for "into splinters goes the calf of Samaria."[3] It is literally hacked to pieces, that the precious metal with which it is overlaid may the more easily "be carried to Assyria for a present"—a forced present—"to king Jareb."[4] But in spite of this effort the final catastrophe is hastening on: and then how terrible the fate that awaits the cities of Israel! "All thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle," that day when "the mother was dashed in pieces with her children"; "So," adds the prophet, "shall Bethel also do unto you because of your great wickedness."[5] Thus swiftly swept away, will pass out of sight the Northern Kingdom, which only a quarter of a century before under the second Jeroboam was standing at the height of its power. "As for Samaria," cries the prophet, "her king is cut off as foam upon the water."[6]

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[1] In the Lucianic recension of the Septuagint he is styled by some strange confusion "Adrammelech the Ethiopian, living in Egypt."

[2] According to Prof. Flinders Petrie the last syllable of Shabaka is only the article. This king was very likely known as Shab, or Sab. In modern Nubian *sab* is the male wild cat.

[3] Cf. Chapter XII, p. 113 below.

[4] *Sargon of Assyria*, p. 45, note 3.

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[1] The same simile is found in the inscriptions of Tiglathpileser. Cf. the Tablet Inscription from Nimrud, Obv. line 15, "Chaldea throughout its entire extent I brought down as with a bird-net."

[2] Hos. x. 5.

[3] *Ibid.* viii. 6, Wellhausen's translation.

[4] *Ibid.* x. 6.

[5] *Ibid.* x. 14, 15. The reference possibly is to some devastation inflicted by Salamanu king of Moab, who in 732 paid tribute to Tiglathpileser.

[6] *Ibid.* x. 7.

CHAPTER VII

TIGLATHPILESER KING OF BABYLON

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning!"—Isa. xiv. 12.

"THE burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." The heading thus prefixed to the remarkable prophecy contained in Isa. xiii.–xiv. 23, at which we are about to look, may be compared with those found in chaps. i, 1 and ii. 1. Did the unknown editor, who inserted these headings, foresee that the time might come when the Isaianic authorship of the prophecies to which they are prefixed would be called in question? If so, his foresight has been abundantly justified in the case of this "burden"; for few indeed of the many critics, who have studied this passage, have found themselves able to believe that it came from the pen of the prophet Isaiah. The very mention of the Medes in chap. xiii. 17, and of Chaldean Babylon two verses later, seems to settle the question in the eyes of most. And yet, just as for those of us who are willing to go far enough afield

"there are hills beyond Pentland, and lands beyond Forth";

so, for those who have penetrated into the regions of history opened up by the Assyrian inscriptions, there are Chaldeans before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, and Medes before the days of Cyrus: facts, which have thrown a quite new light on this "burden," as well as on that contained in chap. xxi. 1–10.

The Assyrian inscriptions began to be read about the middle of the nineteenth century. It is not, then, surprising to find that so long ago as the year 1874 the late Sir Edward Strachey, in his work entitled *Jewish History and Politics in the Times of Sargon and Sennacherib*, expressed his belief that the king of Babylon, against whom the "parable" of Isa. xiv. was hurled, was a king of Assyria. Admitting the difficulty arising from the fact that in previous chapters Israel's oppressor is called the king of Assyria, whilst he is here styled the king of Babylon, Sir Edward observes that Isaiah's authority for any historical fact is as good as that of any other record of his times, and that the absence of any direct confirmation ought not to throw doubt on the genuineness of the prophetic allusions to a fact probable in itself and uncontradicted.[1] It will be my part to show that the "direct confirmation," which was lacking at the time when Sir Edward Strachey wrote, is now obtainable and strongly confirms his surmise. For the contemporary cuneiform inscriptions show that at the very time when, from its position in his book, Isaiah may be supposed to have written this prophecy, an event of great importance had happened in Western Asia—a mighty conqueror, who in the first instance had usurped the throne of Assyria, had just succeeded in establishing his power in Babylon, so that for the first time in the history of Assyria her king was the acknowledged master of the two thrones, and could, and did, hold his court both in Assyria and at Babylon.

In studying this subject it will be necessary for my readers in the first place to recall the position which Babylon occupied in the then political world. As this has been dwelt upon at some length in the opening chapter, it will be sufficient here to add that in Isaiah's days there were two Babylons—a Chaldean Babylon and an Assyrian Babylon. The former of these was inclined to be friendly to Israel, the latter hostile. Chaldea itself—*i.e.* the low country which stretches south-east from Babylon to the head of the Persian Gulf—was divided into several small kingdoms, and the possession of the ancient sacred city was a much-coveted prize in the eyes of the Chaldean kinglets. These facts, gathered from the inscriptions, correspond exactly with the terms in which Babylon is described in chap. xiii. 19:

> "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
> The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride."

in which passage, as the parallelism suggests, the "kingdoms" spoken of are not kingdoms of any great extent or importance, but merely the petty Chaldean states which lie between Babylon and the head of the Persian Gulf. Further, it must be borne in mind that when Babylon was not in the hands of the Chaldeans, it was in the hands of the Assyrians, until after one or two fluctuations it fell entirely under the Assyrians in 689 B.C. during the reign of Sennacherib, and remained under them till 625 B.C., when the Chaldeans again obtained the ascendancy in the person of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, and remained masters of the sacred city down to the time of Cyrus, 539 B.C.

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[1] Page 166.

Now the great tyrant of the "parable" in Isa. xiv. 4–23 was clearly no petty Chaldean king, but a world-ruler, before whom all opposing powers had gone down, a "man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home." [1] Supposing, then, the prophet to be writing in the days of Ahaz, as is suggested by the note of time at the commencement of his next Burden,[2] and to have before his mind some ruler then living, it is clear that the only monarch who at all answers to the description given is the same great king, concerning whom he has already uttered some predictions in chaps. vii.–ix., viz. Tiglathpileser king of Assyria. Let us inquire, then, how far the history of those times warrants such an identification.

Tiglathpileser III mounted the throne of Assyria in 745 B.C., at a time when that great military empire was torn asunder by civil dissensions and was altogether at a very low ebb. Hitherto he has been regarded as a usurper, but according to the inscription on a brick recently found in the temple of Ashur at Ashur he claimed to be the son of Adad-nirari king of Assyria (812–783 B.C.).[3] Adad-nirari was the son of his predecessor, Shamshi-Adad, whose wife Sammuramat, the Semiramis of the Classical writers, was a Babylonian princess. On the dynastic tablets of the Babylonians Tiglathpileser is called Pul: compare 2 Kings xv. 19. In Ptolemy's Canon we find the Persian form of this name, Poros, while Berosus calls him Phulus. The throne-name, Tiglathpileser, was assumed by him after a great and powerful monarch who sat on the throne of Assyria half a century before the time of David. The first Tiglathpileser is described by Sayce as "the central figure of the Old Empire, towering above his fellows on the Assyrian throne." By the assumption, then, of this name Tiglathpileser sought to ingratiate himself with his Assyrian subjects. To the Babylonians the name would not sound pleasing, for Tiglathpileser I had defeated one of their kings, Marduk-nadin-akhi, and had captured Babylon. They preferred therefore to call him by his private name, Pul.

The new king, having seized the reins of power, the Assyrian Empire under his vigorous and politic rule at once started up into fresh life, and became active and aggressive, as was ever its wont in prosperous days. Owing perhaps to his Babylonian descent, he appears to have had his eye on that city from the first, for only six months had elapsed when he started on his first campaign to "the country of the rivers," *i.e.* to Chaldea on the lower reaches of the Euphrates and Tigris.[1] This region was soon conquered and laid under tribute, even Karduniash, the district round Babylon, being subdued. But the invader did not attempt to take Babylon or to remove Nabonassar, the Chaldean sovereign, who then occupied the throne. His object was rather to ingratiate himself with the powerful Babylonian priesthood by offering costly sacrifices to the gods of Babylon. As Anspacher points out,[2] had he at once mounted the throne of Babylon, he would have had his hands tied, for in order to legitimise his rule he would have been obliged to be present in Babylon " to take the hands of Bel " at every New Year's festival: and this he could not afford to do until he had carried out the plan of conquest which he had laid down for himself. The object of his first visit was clearly to conciliate, and so to pave the way for his presently mounting the throne. His second year was occupied in an expedition to Namri in the direction of Media. Then followed the four years' campaign in the West to Arpad. In 739 he was on the Ararat frontier. In 738 he was in Hamath, and the following year in Media: in 736 on the Upper Tigris; in 735 in Ararat. Then followed the three years' campaigning in the West at which we have been looking, and which ended with the fall of Damascus in 732 B.C. His empire being now established on all sides, he was at liberty to turn his attention to Babylon once more; and that, at a very opportune moment. Nabonassar had died in 733 B.C., and in the two short years which had elapsed since his death the throne of Babylon had changed hands three times, the present occupant being the ruler of the petty Chaldean state of Beth-Amukkan. It was for Tiglathpileser to play the rôle of deliverer of the sacred city from her enemies. Accordingly, in 731 he overran three of the small Chaldean states " like a deluge-wave, and reduced them to heaps and ruins." [3] Three others, including Bit-Jakin, the hereditary principality of Merodach-baladan, saved themselves by a timely tribute. Whether Tiglathpileser was actually master of Babylon in 731 B.C. is uncertain, but in any case he had achieved that position by 729 B.C., in which year we find him in the sacred city engaging in the religious ceremony alluded to above, " taking the hands of Bel," a ceremony which held a foremost place in the eyes of the Babylonians, Bel-Merodach being their patron god. It was in this same year, 729, that the important inscription on the Clay Tablet from Nimrûd was written. That inscription opens with the following list of titles: "Tiglathpileser, the great king, the mighty king, the king of multitudes, the king of Assyria, *the king of Babylon*, the king of Shumer and Akkad" (*i.e.* Southern and Northern Babylonia), etc.[1] Now with regard to this title, *shar Babili* "king of Babylon," which appears again on Slab No. 2,[2] it is a remarkable fact that no other Assyrian king, as far as we know, ever ventured to assume it. Even the great Sargon, who in 709 B.C. also "took the hands of Bel," and his grandson Esarhaddon, the rebuilder of Babylon, who raised the city from a state of utter desolation, were both of them content with the more modest title *sakkanak Babili*, "Viceroy of Babylon," *i.e.* Viceroy of the god Bel-Merodach. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the title *shar Babili* was borne by those Sovereigns, who, like Merodach-baladan, Shamash-shûm-ukin the son of Esarhaddon, the great Nebuchadnezzar, and others, actually lived and reigned in Babylon. The presumption, then, is that Tiglathpileser not merely held his court at Babylon for a short time, but that he actually took up his abode there during the closing years of his reign, or, at any rate, made it his southern Ecbatana, if one may so say. Such an inference is borne out by the short, significant statement, "the king took the hands of Bel," being repeated in the Assyrian Chronicle for the two successive years 729 and 728 B.C.[3]

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[1] Isa. xiv. 16, 17.

[2] Isa. xiv. 28.

[3] Luckenbill, *Ancient Records* (*Assyria and Babylonia*), vol. i, p. 294.

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[1] See the Eponym List with addenda for the year 745 B.C., Chapter II, p. 18.

[2] *Columbia University Contributions to Oriental History and Philology.* No. 5. New York 1912.

[3] Nimrûd Tablet Inscription, line 25. See *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. v, p. 115.

Let us now imagine ourselves in the world of Western Asia at this eventful period. What is the great political feature that would fix itself on the mind of a statesman-prophet like Isaiah? Would it not be the towering ascendancy of this mighty monarch, who has achieved what no other Assyrian king had ever done before, viz. to make himself master of the two thrones—the throne of Assyria and the throne of Babylon? [4] When, then, the prophet utters his sublime "parable" against this ambitious potentate, by what name shall he call him? Shall he call him "king of Assyria"? He would doubtless have done so in 734 B.C. But in 729 B.C. he will style him by his last and greatest achievement, which suits best the tone and tenor of his "parable"—"king of

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[1] Nimrûd Tablet Inscription, line 1.

[2] See the valuable work of Paul Rost, *Die Keilschrifttexte Tiglathpileser's*.

[3] *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. ii, p. 120.

[4] Tukulti-Ninip I, sometimes called Tukulti-Urta and Tiglath-Urash, who reigned over Assyria *ca.* 1275 B.C., did indeed hold Babylon in subjection for seven years and govern it by his prefects, but never occupied the throne of Babylon in the same way as Tiglathpileser III. See *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. v, p. 111.

Babylon." Further, while on the Nimrûd Tablet the title "king of Assyria" naturally takes precedence of the title "king of Babylon," the world at large, and in all probability the monarch himself, would think most of the latter title, for Babylon was both the mother city and the sacred city, and as such enjoyed a prestige to which Assyria could lay no claim. On these grounds it seems most natural that Isaiah should style the tyrant "king of Babylon" rather than "king of Assyria." But when we note that the prophetic "parable," chap. xiv. 4–23, which contains this title, not only forms part of a Burden relating to Babylon, but also contains a mysterious prediction as to the fate awaiting that city,[1] it at once becomes evident that the prophet could have used no other title.

But though the tyrant of the Isaianic Burden is styled "king of Babylon," there is yet a remarkable indication given that he is in some way connected with Assyria; for the "parable" concludes with a twofold asseveration, uttered in the name of "Jehovah of hosts," and is followed by the prediction of a catastrophe presently to overtake the Assyrian in Jehovah's land and upon His mountains, into which prediction the same twofold asseveration is introduced, only in yet stronger terms: "Jehovah of hosts hath sworn," "Jehovah of hosts hath purposed." Thus the tragic overthrow of the Assyrian in the Holy Land, which received its fulfilment in the destruction of Sennacherib's army, is appended as a postscript to a "parable" foretelling the downfall of the king of Babylon: a thing inexplicable, unless there had existed at the time such a union of the two thrones as I have just traced.

Immediately after the above remarkable postscript occurs another Burden, viz. that against Philistia, introduced by a valuable note of time, as follows: "In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden. Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee, because the rod that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent." This oracle was uttered in the death-year of Ahaz; and further, it must have been uttered before his death, otherwise it would have been dated the first year of Hezekiah? Who, then, was the rod that smote Philistia? Clearly not Ahaz, for he was still living; but rather that great king, master of the two thrones, concerning whose rule the prophet declares in his "parable," "The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre," or *rod*—it is the same word as in xiv. 29—"of the rulers; that smote the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke."[2] That Tiglathpileser smote the Philistines we have already seen in our last chapter, and, as there noted, the entry in the Chronicle for his 12th year, 734 B.C., is "to Philistia." Hence the very position of this oracle concerning Philistia in the Book of Isaiah serves to confirm our identification of the great tyrant who forms the subject of the "parable" with Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, whilst the time of its utterance—viz. the death-year of Ahaz—seems to point in the same direction.

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[1] Isa. xiv. 23.

[2] Isa. xiv. 5, 6.

According to the tenor of both prophecies—the burden of Babylon and that against Philistia—the tyrant's end was to be, and actually was, sudden. The "rod" was "broken," snapped short. All the glory came to an end in a moment, like the fall of a star from heaven, so that Isa. xiv. 29 may be looked upon as a record of the fulfilment of Isa. xiv. 12. Further, we gather from the "parable" that the end was to come on the field of battle, and that the king's body would be left amid the carnage, dishonoured, unburied. "All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch," a worthless scion of thy family, "clothed with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit, as a carcase trodden underfoot. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, thou hast slain thy people." [1] That Tiglathpileser died in battle is rendered probable by the entry in the Assyrian Chronicle for the year 727 B.C.: "Against the city of . . . Shalmaneser seated himself on the throne." [2] In the Babylonian Chronicle the reign and death of Tiglathpileser are set down as follows: "Tiglathpileser sat upon the throne in Babylon. In his second year Tiglathpileser died in the month Tebet (Dec.–Jan.). For eighteen years Tiglathpileser exercised the sovereignty over Akkad (Babylonia) and Assyria: for two years he reigned legitimately in Akkad. On the 25th day of the month Tebet Shalmaneser sat upon the throne in Assyria." [3] The Assyrian word for "died" in the above is "fate," being probably short for "fate overtook him." It tells us nothing as to the manner of death, being used both of a peaceful death in the palace, like that of Nabonassar, or of one in war, like that of Tirhakah.[4]

The accession of Shalmaneser in the same month in which his predecessor died, shows that the crown passed by succession from one to the other, and is suggestive of the fact that he was the son of Tiglathpileser. This surmise has been confirmed by the discovery of a treaty made between Esarhaddon and Baal of Tyre, in which Shalmaneser is expressly styled the son of Tiglathpileser.[1] On the Second Dynastic Tablet from Babylon both Tiglathpileser and Shalmaneser are called by their private names, Pulu and Ululai respectively, the latter signifying "he of the month Elul" (Aug.-Sept.), in allusion probably to the time of his birth. The very homeliness of this latter name is suggestive that at the time when it was given the father, though a man of royal descent, occupied only a private position. This is most likely to have been the case, for the facts that Tiglathpileser reigned only eighteen years, and that before his death his son was deemed fit to be entrusted with the important post of governor of the Mediterranean province, seem to show that Shalmaneser must have been born before his father usurped the throne of Assyria. Then, with regard to birth, it is not unlikely that both Tiglathpileser and his son. being regarded as genuine Babylonians in virtue of their descent from Semiramis,[2] were therefore styled by their birth-names in the Babylonian king-lists. This would throw light on the threat near the close of the Isaianic Burden, "I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon, name and remnant, and son and son's son, saith the Lord."[3] That threat was fulfilled in the death of Shalmaneser just five years after his accession, which is thus recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle: "in (his) 5th year Shalmaneser died in the month Tebet (Dec.-Jan.). For five years Shalmaneser reigned over the countries of Akkad (Babylonia) and Assyria. On the 12th day of the month Tebet Sargon sat upon the throne in Assyria. In the month Nisan (March-April) Merodach-baladan sat upon the throne in Babylon." With the accession of Sargon we come to the last dynasty of Assyrian kings, embracing the reigns of four mighty monarchs who followed in direct succession, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal, followed by the short reigns of two inglorious successors.

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[1] Isa. xiv. 18–20.

[2] *Records of the Past,* New Series, vol. ii, p. 126.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. i, p. 23.

[4] The expression used of Tirhakah is "he went to the fate of his night."

The inscriptions and bas-reliefs of Tiglathpileser written and portrayed on the walls of his palace at Nimrûd were treated with scant courtesy by this new dynasty. Esarhaddon removed them and used them as material in the South-West palace which was unfinished at the time of his death. Layard was greatly surprised to find bas-reliefs when left entire turned with their faces to the wall: others turned towards the chamber but carefully erased, the only part of the figures remaining being the feet, which would probably have been concealed by the pavement of the chamber. As the explorer remarks, it is evident that these bas-reliefs had been purposely destroyed. In a third instance, where the walls of a room were still unfinished, many of the slabs were still lying in the centre of the chamber, arranged in rows with great regularity, and in one or two instances placed one above the other.[1] To this fact is due the preservation of a portion of the annals of Tiglathpileser, which are simply invaluable to the student of Old Testament history. Of Shalmaneser his son we have no remains except a single lion-weight inscribed with his name.[2] And yet it is evident, both from Scripture and from the half-obliterated record of the Assyrian Eponym List, that his short reign was not deficient in warlike activities. What, then, was the cause of the unpopularity of these two kings in the age which followed them? Was it that they made Babylon the seat of empire, thus casting a slight upon Assyria, or that Tiglathpileser had in some way, as the prophet declares, destroyed his land and slain his people? [3] In any case this strange treatment of the records of Assyria's greatest king is in harmony with the strong expressions of loathing and contempt for the tyrant contained in the latter part of the Isaianic "parable."

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[1] See H. Winckler in Eberhard Schrader's *Keilinschriften*, 3rd Edn. pt. i, p. 62, note 2.

[2] According to Herodotus, Bk. i, 184, Semiramis was queen of Babylon.

[3] Isa. xiv. 22.

In chap. xiv. 12 we meet with a most striking figure to portray the sudden downfall of this all-powerful tyrant: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning!" This figure, so strikingly beautiful in itself, is no less suitable from the point of view of Assyro-Babylonian mythology. In Assyria, as Oppert observes, the Morning Star was called *kakkabu mushtelil*, "l'étoile brillante," where *mushtelil* comes from the same root as the Hebrew word *heylêl* "radiant one," rendered "day star" in the Revised Version. Thus in the syllabary given in Rawlinson's *Western Asia Inscriptions*, vol. iii, p. 57, we read in line 60, "*kakkab ilu Nabu, kakkab sharri, kakkabu mushtelil*" = "l'étoile de Nabu, l'étoile du roi, l'étoile brillante," *i.e.* Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus respectively. Also in line 36 of the same syllabary, Venus as the Morning Star is identified with Ishtar thus: "*Dilbat ina Shamash atsi Ishtar kakkabu*," *i.e.* "Dilbat (Venus) at the sunrise is the star of Ishtar." [4] Why is the usurper likened to the

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[1] Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. i, p. 351, and vol. ii, pp. 27, 29, 30.

[2] Since the above was written a short mutilated inscription of Shalmaneser from the Temple of Nebo at Borsippa has been brought to light. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, vol. i, p. 297.

[3] Isa. xiv. 20.

[4] See *Journal Asiatique* for the year 1871, p. 448.

Morning Star, the star of Ishtar? Not merely because of its brilliance, but because among the Assyrians Ishtar as the Morning Star—*i.e.* Ishtar of Arbela—was the war goddess, "the lady of battle and war," "the lady of onset," "the strengthener of battle," "the chieftain of heaven and earth." "Not only," writes Prof. Sayce, "was Ishtar the Evening Star, the companion of the Moon, she became also the Morning Star, the companion and herald of the Sun. It was thus that she assumed the attributes of a male deity, since Dun-khud-e, "the hero who issues forth at daybreak," was both a god and the Morning Star." Further, in Babylonia Ishtar bore the name of Nana and the title "Queen of Babylon," and it was under this name and title that Tiglathpileser offered sacrifices to her in Babylonia. She was also called "Queen of the Mountain of the World," a mountain supposed by some writers to be "the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north," referred to in the "parable."[1] If, then, a great and mighty warrior whose fame has spread far and wide, whose policy is everywhere successful, be not unsuitably represented by a brilliant star, it is clear that the writer of the "parable" in Isa. xiv could not have chosen a more fitting simile, for he thus identifies Assyria's warrior king with the star of her "goddess of battles"; and Babylon's, nay the world's ruler, with the star of "the Queen of Babylon," "the Queen of the Mountain of the World." Further, let it be noticed that this identification of the king with the war-goddess is not unlike that which meets us in the opening words of the "parable":

> "How hath the oppressor ceased!
> The gold-exactress ceased!"

where the oppressor is identified with the oppressing city which forms the seat of his power.

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[1] Isa. xiv. 13.

CHAPTER VIII

TIGLATHPILESER KING OF BABYLON (*continued*)

"The man—that let not loose his prisoners to their home."—ISA. xiv. 16, 17.

WHATEVER loathing may have been felt for Tiglathpileser as an oppressive tyrant, there can be no doubt that, as a clever administrator and mighty ruler, he forms a fit subject for the "parable" of Isa. xiv. The following extract from the pen of Prof. J. F. McCurdy will explain the greatness and genius of this gifted man:

"The middle of the eighth century B.C. found the Assyrian Empire almost reduced to its original limits, and struggling rather for existence than for supremacy among the nations. The loss of territory, wealth, and prestige, the decline in trade and commerce, the revolts and dissensions within the capitals itself, the threatened incursions of border tribes, all pointed to the necessity of a change of rulers, which should result in restoring its accustomed power to the realm of Asshur. The man who responded to the demand, Tiglathpileser III, did a great deal more than merely restore the old order of things. His administration of eighteen years, 745 to 727 B.C., began a new era, not merely in the history of Assyria, but also in the history of the world. Several of his predecessors had made conquests equal, or nearly equal, to his; but he was the first who knew how to retain the possessions thus acquired—he was the first, indeed, who anywhere ruled over an empire in the true sense of this term. Before him the territory claimed by the rulers of Babylonia and Assyria was held for the most part on a very precarious tenure. The new king introduced new ideas of organisation and administration, and these principles, steadily acted upon by himself and his successors, finally resulted in the establishment of a comparatively settled government throughout the North-Semitic world."[1]

To the same effect is the testimony of Prof. Sayce:

"Tiglathpileser was a man of great ability and force of character.

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[1] *Prophecy, History, and the Monuments*, vol. i, p. 321—a remarkably able work.

He excelled as a commander, he equally excelled as an administrator and civil organiser. His campaigns were not mere raids carried on for the sake of plunder, like those of earlier Assyrian sovereigns; they were all conceived with a definite object, and carried out according to a definite plan. Tiglathpileser determined to found an empire in Western Asia, which should embrace the whole of the civilized world, and the centre of which should be Nineveh "—better Kalah—" or Babylon. It was a new idea in history. Hitherto a royal conqueror had been content with exacting tribute, which was paid by the conquered people as long as the foreign army was near them, and refused as soon as it was withdrawn. The conquered districts had to be reconquered again and again; they were never welded into one with the conquering power, and formed into a homogeneous empire. To found such an empire was the task undertaken by Tiglathpileser. Slowly but surely he extended the Assyrian sway, turning the conquered countries into Assyrian provinces under Assyrian satraps appointed by the supreme king himself. The taxes to be paid by the newly constituted satrapies were carefully apportioned, and a great civil bureaucracy was organised which had its centre and head in Nineveh. For the first time in the history of the world the conception of imperial centralisation was formed, and an attempt was made to realise it in fact. The second Assyrian empire, founded by Tiglathpileser, was thus a new experiment in political history. It marks the beginning of a new era." [1]

Tiglathpileser, then, was not merely a great warrior king who had achieved the unheard-of success of uniting the two kingdoms of Assyria and Babylon, but he was also, as the above extracts show, a civil administrator, who had originated a new policy, by which he was able to hold together a vast empire. This new policy was a very drastic one and very oppressive, although so far as the Assyrian empire was concerned it was successful for over a century. It consisted in part of a regular system of finance and the annual payment of a fixed tribute, and there are still extant fragments of the tribute lists of this king, in which the amount to be paid by the different cities is nicely apportioned.[2] Further, it is impossible to acquit this great monarch of that grasping covetous spirit so characteristic of Assyrian rulers. All the riches of the provinces were to flow towards the capital. The Assyrian lion was bent on filling " his caves with prey and his dens with ravin." [3]

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[1] *The Times of Isaiah*, pp. 40, 41.

[2] *Records of the Past*, First Series, vol. xi, pp. 139–144.

[3] Nahum ii. 12.

Witness the names which he gives to the halls and gateways of his palace at Kalah: "Holding abundance," "Preserving the tribute of mountains and seas," "Causing the fulness of the lands to enter into the presence of the king their lord."[1] When, then, a second capital was established by him at Babylon, the same thing must have gone on still. The wealth that had flowed together to Kalah must now have been diverted, in part at any rate, to the banks of the Euphrates. Babylon must now have become "the golden city" of the "parable," or, rather "the gold-exactress,"[2] and is identified by the prophet with the grasping tyrant who has founded his new capital in her. Hence the opening stanza of the "parable":

> "How hath the oppressor ceased!
> The gold-exactress ceased!"

Further, when we read the words that follow,

> "Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked, (plur.)
> The sceptre of the rulers;
> That smote the people in wrath
> With a continual stroke,"

it is impossible not to see a reference to the provincial governors instituted by Tiglathpileser, one of whose main duties was to collect the taxes. The conquered countries, as stated by Sayce, were formed into provinces. Each province was made up of so many districts, and the provincial governor was called *bel pikhāti* "lord of the districts," his duties being both civil and military, and of these none more important than the collection of the annual tribute. This was the "continual stroke" of which the prophet speaks, and we can see from his words that it was exacted with great harshness. Of the provinces formed by

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[1] *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. v, p. 128.

[2] The word *madhébhah*, here used, occurs nowhere else. It is probably an Aramaic noun. Aramaic was not unknown to the prophet Isaiah: see chap. xxxvi. 11, and in chap. xxi. 12 he uses two Aramaic words rendered "inquire" and "come." The use of such a word here may possibly be due to the fact that Aramaic was the language of commerce no less than of diplomacy, and therefore well suited to furnish an epithet descriptive of Babylon as the centre of taxation under Tiglathpileser. That forced taxation is the subject here alluded to, may also be gathered from the fact that the Hebrew word translated "oppressor," as in chap. ix. 4, is rendered in Dan. xi. 20 "exactor," where the reference is to Seleucus Philopator raising money to pay a heavy annual tribute to the Romans. In 2 Kings xv. 20 it is used of Menahem exacting money of his subjects to pay tribute to Tiglathpileser. On the whole the Vulgate version appears to have caught the sense: "*cessavit exactor, quievit tributum.*" Note further that Babylon, the golden cup of Jer. li. 7 and the golden head of Dan. ii. 38, appears here as the gold-exactress.

Tiglathpileser, "two," writes Prof. Goodspeed, "were established in eastern Babylonia, two in the eastern highlands, one in northern Syria out of the kingdom of Unqi,[1] two in central Syria—that of Damascus and that of the nineteen districts about Hamath—two in Phoenicia, and one in Northern Israel."[2] It is said of the tyrant in the "parable" that he "made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof," and then a little later come the words. "Prepare ye slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they rise not up, and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world with cities."[3] This seeming contradiction is explained by the well-known policy of Assyrian conquerors, viz. first, to turn fenced cities into ruinous heaps, and secondly, with a strategic object, to rebuild some of the captured cities or erect fresh cities in their neighbourhood. Tiglathpileser repeatedly tells us how he "destroyed, laid waste, and burned with fire" the cities of his enemies; but he also tells us how on the Median border he built the cities anew,[4] no doubt intending to use them as outposts and as stepping-stones to further conquests. There is, however, one most striking point in the description of the great world-tyrant of the "parable," which appears to mark him out beyond all doubt as Assyria's great king, since it describes most exactly the new line of policy which he inaugurated, and of which Israel was to taste the bitter fruit. When the great conqueror departs this life and his spirit goes down to the shades, the spirits of other departed rulers are depicted as viewing him with astonishment and saying, "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home?"[5] The last clause is the climax of the description, whether the speakers be regarded as recounting the tyrant's exploits or his evil deeds, the latter view being the more probable. The shades of the departed seem to say to the fallen monarch, "Thou wouldst not let thy prisoners go to their home (literally "*to their house*"); so, while the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, *every one in his own house*, thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre: *thou hast no house to rest in*, thy body lies unburied on the field of battle."

"*That let not loose his prisoners to their home*"—What is the meaning of these words? for they have much puzzled the com-

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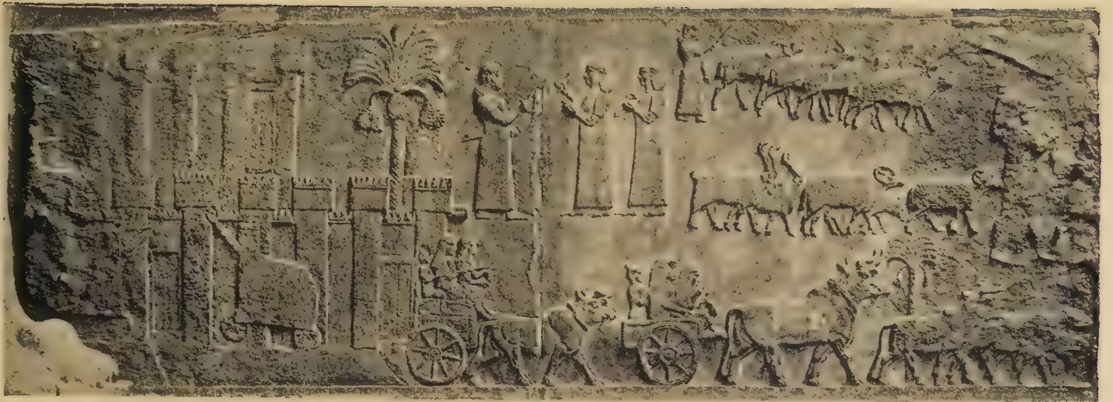
[1] The name survives in El Amk, the great swamp to the north of the Syrian Antioch.

[2] *History of the Babylonians and the Assyrians*, p. 238.

[3] Isa. xiv. 17, 21.

[4] See Note at the end of this chapter.

[5] Isa. xiv. 16, 17.



GOING INTO CAPTIVITY.

facing p. 82.

mentators; as, for instance, in a well-known modern commentary, where the writer remarks, "Unreadiness to release prisoners (ordinary common captives according to the Hebrew) is not the greatest of enormities."[1] Very true: but the mystery is explained by the inscriptions of Tiglathpileser. These show us that the captives meant are not captives taken in war on the field of battle, but conquered peoples, removed and deported in a wholesale fashion from one part of the empire to another. What former kings had done on a small scale, Tiglathpileser did on a scale hitherto unknown. "Thus," as Goodspeed remarks, "more than 135,000 persons were removed from Babylonia, 65,000 from the eastern highlands, 70,000 from the northern highlands, and 30,000 from the districts about Hamath, and these are not all that the inscriptions mention."[2] This, as Anspacher points out,[3] was the special policy of Tiglathpileser. Instead of colonising newly acquired territories after the former fashion with Assyrians, which would soon have depleted the homeland, he kept his Assyrian subjects at home, and brought subjugated populations from a distance. These imported colonists in their troubles with those around them had only Assyria to look to for help, and would thus learn to regard her as a deliverer, whilst the Assyrian governor in case of a rebellion on the part of the old inhabitants would naturally press the new colonists into his service. This system of colonisation gave Assyria the lease of life which she enjoyed, so that to Tiglathpileser was due the continuance of the empire. Nevertheless the new policy must have pressed with great hardness on the conquered peoples, and on none more so than on Israel. For, according to the idea generally prevalent in those days, the national gods were local gods, and to be forced to change one's country meant to be forced to change one's religion. This a heathen could do with comparative ease, for to him it only meant the putting himself under the care of a fresh divinity. But in the case of the more enlightened Jew it was far more difficult, for he had been taught that the heathen gods were nonentities or even evil spirits, and that Jehovah was the only living and true God. He had also been taught that his own country was especially "the land of the Lord."[4] For him, therefore, it was a much more serious thing. Hence the new policy inaugurated by Tiglathpileser would be in his eyes most abhorrent, and the tyrant's greatest crime would be summed up in those words, he "let not loose his prisoners to their home."[5]

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[1] *International Critical Commentary.*

[2] Goodspeed's *History*, p. 239.

[3] Anspacher, *Contribution to Oriental History and Philology*, No. 5.

[4] Isa. xiv. 2.

[5] Cf. Mic. ii. 4, 10.

In view of the above it is not surprising to find inserted in the prophetic " burden " a promise of return from this newly invented, national captivity : see Isa. xiv. 1, 2. Yet at first sight it seems strange that this promise should be placed, not after that later portion of the " burden," viz. the " parable " which predicts the tyrant's downfall and contains the striking words at which we have been looking, but after the earlier portion which predicts the ultimate fate of the great city which he has just made his new capital. The probable explanation is that Babylon stands for the empire as well as for the city, in fact for the Babylonian power as wielded by this great monarch—a power which has been driving the nations hither and thither like a flock of sheep—and the prophet has already predicted that in the day of his downfall, viz. in 722 B.C. when the dynasty came to an end, " as a chased roe and as a sheep that no man gathereth, they shall turn every man to his own people, and shall flee every man to his own land." Did we know the full history of the convulsions, which must have shaken the so lately formed Assyro-Babylonian Empire on the death of Shalmaneser V and which are so forcibly predicted in chap. xiii. 9–14, we should understand better the force of this prediction.

But the promise of a national return for Israel, given in chap. xiv. 1, 2, certainly goes far beyond any mere escape of individuals from captivity. The nations are to take her and reinstate her in " the land of the Lord," and Israel is to rule over her erstwhile oppressors. Now it has been said that this promise is " *unrelated to Isaiah's own age*," and is based " *upon a condition of things not yet existent* " in Isaiah's day.[1] But as far as regards the captivity of Israel, *i.e.* the Ten Tribes, this was not the case. Israel's capivity was a dire reality in 729 B.C., *before* the extinction of the Northern Kingdom. Further, on a close study of the terms employed in chap. xiv. 1, 2, it will be found that the terms in which the promise is given are as a matter of fact in exact accordance with the then existing state of things—viz. the captivity in great measure of the kingdom of Israel while Judah remained still intact. This will be seen at once if a comparison be made between Isa. xiv. 1, 2 and the long prophecy against Babylon contained in Jer. l.–li. 58. Thus, in Jer. l. 20 we read of Israel *and Judah*, in l. 33 of their being oppressed *together*, in l. 4 of their *joint* repentance, li. 5 that *neither of them* are forsaken of God ; while in li. 24 mention is made of evil done *in Zion*, and in l. 5, 28 and li. 10 promises are given of a return *to Zion*. In Isa. xiv. 1, 2 no such language is used. Though captivity is a present reality, yet no express mention is made of Judah, nor is anything said of a return to Zion. The captives are merely spoken of in such general terms as " Jacob " and " Israel," " house of Jacob," " house of Israel," which, while they do not exclude Judah, do not necessarily include her. Finally, in this brief prophecy the return spoken of is not to Zion, but " to their own land," to " their place," to " the land of the Lord." The inference, then, is that when Isa. xiv. 1, 2 was written Israel was in captivity, but *not* Judah; and this was the state of things near the close of the reign of Tiglathpileser, when a considerable part of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes had gone into captivity, while those who remained in the land of their fathers were under the sway of Hoshea, the nominee of Assyria.

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[1] *Isaiah : his Life and Times*, pp. 85–86, by the late Prof. Driver. The italics are his, not mine.

NOTE

On Tiglathpileser rebuilding conquered cities and filling them with foreign colonists

On the Tablet Inscription from Nimrûd after recounting his conquests in Media and how he had laid waste their cities, the conqueror adds, "The countries of Namri, Bit-Sangibuti, Bit-Khamban, Sumurzu, Bit-Barrua, Bit-zualzas, Bit-Matti, Niqqu, which is in Umliyas, Bit-Taranzai, Parsua, Bit-Zatti, Bit-Abdadani, Bit-Kapsi, Bit-Sangi, Bit-Urzakki, the cities of Bit-Ishtar and Zakruti, of remote Media, to the territory of Assyria I added. The cities which were in them anew I built; the worship of Ashur my lord in the midst I established; people from the countries the conquest of my hands I settled therein; my generals as governors over them I appointed": lines 34–37.

CHAPTER IX

THE MIGHTY MEDES

"The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people!"
—ISA. xiii. 4.

HOW grandly mysterious is the opening of the Burden of Babylon! The signal for assembling an army is seen set up on a lofty mountain: a mysterious voice is heard, a hand beckons. It is the Almighty mustering His warriors, "the weapons of His indignation." Much is said about them: their might, their multitude; the terror they inspire, the carnage they inflict. But we have to travel some way on in the Burden before we learn the name of this mighty and much-dreaded foe. Not till we get to the 17th verse is the mystery revealed: "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them."

The Medes: who were they? What was to be their destiny in the history of the world? and what was their position in the days of Tiglathpileser king of Babylon? Alas! we know far too little about them, but this much is certain: first, that they belonged to the same branch of the human family as ourselves, the Indo-European branch;[1] secondly, that they were closely allied to the Persians and spoke the same language. Their destiny was indeed a remarkable one. Aided by Babylon, and probably by Elam also, they were to take the main part in putting down Assyria. Then—some seventy years later—after going over to the side of Cyrus, they along with their sister nation, the Persians, were to capture Babylon and to put an end to the Neo-Babylonian Empire, in return for which in the following year Cyrus was to set over Babylon a Median prince, the "Darius the Mede" of the Book of Daniel, who was none other than his own son Cambyses born of a Median mother.[2] All this, however, lay in the womb of the future, known only to the Almighty: but it bespeaks the Medes a worthy subject to appear on the page of prophecy. In the days of Tiglathpileser the Medes were not yet a kingdom, but only an assemblage of clans, "in the mountains" as the prophecy correctly describes them, *i.e.* in the ranges of the Zagros to the east of Assyria, from which they pressed forward westward, being probably pressed forward themselves from behind. The Assyrian kings, seeing in these mountain clans a possible menace to Assyria, endeavoured to strike terror into them by raiding their country, and to hold them back by establishing fortresses on the Median border. Possibly it was this action on the part of Assyria which led the Medes to see that the only way to advance successfully was to unite under an elected king. This, according to Herodotus,[1] was brought about by a certain Deioces, who appears to be identical with one Daiukku, mentioned by Sargon in the year 715 as prefect of Man, the Minni of Jer. li. 27. In the time of Tiglathpileser this had not yet come about. The Medes were still only a number of independent clans, and it is these clans which are meant by "the kingdoms of the nations" in Isa. xiii. 4: small kingdoms, may be, in themselves, but very terrible in the aggregate.

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[1] Cf. Gen. x. 2 where Madai is spoken of as the son of Japheth.

[2] See the *Persica* of Ctesias, excerpts 2 and 10.

The Medes first appear in the Assyrian annals in the 24th year of Shalmaneser II, 836 B.C., more than a hundred years before the time at which we are looking. According to the Assyrian Chronicle no fewer than eight expeditions to Media were made during the reign of Adad-nirari III, 812–782 B.C. After this Assyria was much engaged in warring against Ararat and we meet with no further expedition against Media till 766 B.C. Tiglathpileser attacked the Median border in his second year, 744, when he went to Namri. In the account of this campaign on the Nimrûd Tablet, after recounting a long list of names ending with the words "districts of the distant Medes," he adds, "to their whole extent I came down upon them like a bird-net. I made a great slaughter of them. 60,500 persons, together with (their) goods, their horses, their mules, their dromedaries, their oxen, their sheep, without number I carried off. Their cities I destroyed, I laid waste, I burned with fire, I reduced to mounds and ruins." Then follows a list of Median districts which were added to Assyrian territory and settled with colonists from other parts, just as a little later in the reign of Sargon we read in 2 Kings xvii. 6 how captive Israelites were transported and placed in the cities of the Medes. In 737 Tiglathpileser made a second expedition into Media, the details of which probably occupied part of the great blank which follows line 50 on the Nimrûd Tablet.[2] In the inscriptions of Assyrian kings the Medes are styled *dannūti*, " mighty," an epithet only given to them and to the Mandā or nomads of the steppes, of whom they are believed by some to have been a branch. That an Assyrian conqueror should speak of any of his enemies as " mighty " is in itself a very remarkable thing and speaks volumes for the terror inspired by them. The Medes are also styled *rukūti* " distant," and *samūti*, by some rendered " obscure," by others " remote." They dwell over a wide extent of mountainous country, from Ellip, the name of the region round the Southern Ecbatana, to Mount Bikni, " the mountain of *uknu* stone," supposed to be the snowy height of Demavend on the south of the Caspian. To the east of them are " the Arabs of the rising sun " and " the mighty Mandā," to the south Elam, to the West the country of Namri forming part of the Assyrian Empire. In the days of Tiglathpileser and his immediate successors Media was divided into numerous districts, and was under the rule of *khazanati*, or " town-governors." We read of " the *khazanati* of the mountains," and of " mighty *khazanati*," for not only were the Medes formidable in the mass, but even separate chieftains were regarded as foes of some importance. In these *khazanati* we see " the kings of the Medes," spoken of in Jer. xxv. 25. Observe, then, how exactly these notices of the Medes, taken from the inscriptions of Assyrian kings, agree with the terms used respecting them in the opening verses of the Isaianic " burden," where Jehovah speaks of them as " *my mighty men*," " *my proudly exulting ones*," and their mustering for war is described as " *the noise of a multitude in the mountains*, like as of a *great people* "—great even in the eyes of the warlike Assyrians—" *the noise of a tumult of the kingdoms of the nations gathered together*." . . . " they come *from a far country, from the uttermost part of heaven*, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation."

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[1] Bk. i. 96–100.

[2] That the expedition to Media described on the Nimrûd Tablet is only the first expedition, is ascertained by comparing the details with those given on the Nimrûd Slab Inscription written *ca.* 742.

But what grudge have the Medes against Babylon ? For in the words " which shall not regard silver, and as for gold they shall not delight in it," taken along with the context, it is clearly implied that they are urged on, not by the lust of plunder, but by a spirit of revenge. The Medes no doubt have a grievous grudge against Babylon as the seat of the Assyrian tyrant ; for this Tiglathpileser according to his own showing has carried into captivity multitudes of their people and vast quantities of spoil. He has destroyed their towns, and built garrison cities among them filled with strangers from other parts. Finally, he has annexed large districts of Media, placed them under Assyrian governors, instituted the worship of " Ashur my lord,' and set up in various places his own hateful image as a standing insult. All this is plain : but what proof is there that Babylon was viewed with hostility by the Medes?

So little is known of Babylonian history during the period in question that it might seem at first sight hopeless to obtain any answer to this question. But happily a stray expression in the inscriptions of Tiglathpileser lets in a ray of light, and appears to show that Babylon had been engaged not so long before in making some attempt to subjugate part of Media; for among the districts and towns of Media conquered by Tiglathpileser mention is twice made of "Silkhazi, which men call *the stronghold of the Babylonians*."[1] Still further light is obtained when we go on to consider that the famous Semiramis, the grandmother of Tiglathpileser, who reigned for five years in Assyria after the death of her husband and during the minority of her son Adad-nirari—a woman of great force of character, of whom the Classical writers have so much to tell us and whom Herodotus speaks of as queen of Babylon—appears to have been a Babylonian princess. On her stele she describes herself as "queen of Shamshi-Adad, king of the universe, king of Assyria; mother of Adad-nirari, king of Assyria; daughter-in-law of Shalmaneser, king of the four regions," etc. Shalmaneser III of Assyria appears to have married his son Shamshi-Adad to a Babylonian princess. Adad-nirari was the fruit of that marriage. During the minority of Adad-nirari, Semiramis, having established her power, in her first expedition attacked the Medes. Her son Adad-nirari, the father of Tiglathpileser, followed in her steps, and, as we have seen, made several expeditions against the Medes. So then, this "*stronghold of the Babylonians*" in Media must point back to the wars of Semiramis and her son; and inasmuch as she was a Babylonian princess, and her grandson Tiglathpileser was now king of Babylon, the grudge of the Medes against Babylon, referred to in Isa. xiii. 17, is seen to be satisfactorily explained.

The close of chap. xiii predicts the final desolation of Babylon. She is to become a desolation for ever, to be shunned even by the nomad shepherds, and to become the haunt of wild animals. "Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there: and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures: and ostriches shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces." To this description Cheyne furnishes a striking parallel from the annals of Ashurbanipal. Ashurbanpial, speaking of his desolation of Elam, says, "Wild asses, gazelles, and beasts of the field of all kinds, I caused to lie down therein in safety." Immediately after this prediction of

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[1] Nimrûd Tablet, lines 31, 38.

Babylon's complete and utter desolation come the words, " and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." Now, as the final desolation of Babylon, even though it may be said to have begun with the capture of that city by the Medes and Persians did not commence till well-nigh two centuries later, it may well be asked what is the meaning of these words, and how were they fulfilled? Assyrian history, as unfolded by the records of Sennacherib, helps us to solve the difficulty. Not till many long centuries had rolled by did Babylon become a mass of dry, arid ruins, the haunt of " wild beasts of the desert " and " doleful creatures "—lit. " howlers " *i.e.* jackals—and other animals that frequent ruins; but a strangely different fate was in store for her in the near future, only a generation after the passing away of the short-lived dynasty of Tiglathpileser, when through the rage of Sennacherib she was " swept with the besom of destruction " and made " a possession for the porcupine (A.V. " bittern ") and pools of water," as predicted in chap. xiv. 23. But it will still be asked, What connection had this near judgment with the far-off judgment, with which it is so closely conjoined in chap. xiii. 22? Did the Medes take any part in it? Had Sennacherib any Median allies when he made his descent on Babylon? To this latter question we can give no definite answer: but this much is worthy of note, that while Sargon made expeditions in the direction of Media in the four successive years 716 to 713 B.C., and Esarhaddon penetrated beyond the many folds of the Zagros, *Sennacherib let the Medes alone.* Only once does he mention them, and that quite casually. At the close of his second campaign he was returning home from the land of the Kassites, to the S.E. of Assyria, when, as he remarks, " I received from the land of the distant Medes a heavy tribute, I placed them beneath my yoke "[1]; words which probably mean nothing more than that the Medes thought it politic to send him a present, and he thought it politic to let them alone. Sennacherib, then, was at peace with the Medes, but whether they helped him in his attack on Babylon we cannot tell. A surer explanation of the close conjunction in which the two judgments to fall upon Babylon are placed in chap. xiii. 21, 22 is to be found in the conjecture that the inspiring Spirit intended the destruction of Babylon by water at the hands of Sennacherib to be a type as well as a pledge and precursor of the destruction of her political power by the invading armies of the Medes and Persians. This conjecture is borne out by the figure used by the prophet Jeremiah when predicting the later judgment: " the sea is come up upon Babylon, she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof."[1] Further, that Jeremiah had the Isaianic Burden in his mind may be gathered from Jer. l. 16–18. For when the storm of vengeance is about to burst on Babylon and the armies of the Medes and Persians are marching through the land, he takes up the very words of Isa. xiii. 14 and tells how the captives "for fear of the oppressing sword shall turn every one to his people, and shall flee every one to his own land." After which he goes on to remark that Jehovah is about to punish the king of Babylon as he has already punished the king of Assyria. "Israel," he exclaims, "is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones." Quite in harmony with this passage is the belief that the oppressor in the Isaianic Burden is an Assyrian king, albeit he is styled by the prophet "king of Babylon."

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[1] Taylor Cyl., ii, 29–33.

With this short chapter on the part played by the Medes we conclude our study of the Burden of Babylon, and it may be well at this point briefly to review the passage and to sum up the results obtained.

Babylon, hitherto "the glory" of the small Chaldean "kingdoms" on the Lower Euphrates, has become in the days of Isaiah for the first time in her history, hardly excepting the reign of Khammurabi, the seat of a world-empire, under the sway of a great monarch, who begins his career as king of Assyria and ends by becoming king of Babylon also, being the only Assyrian king who ventured to assume that title. Further, to the genius of Tiglathpileser must be ascribed the discovery of a new method of empire-government, viz. by the wholesale removal of conquered peoples to other parts of the empire and the bringing in of others to take their place. This is referred to in chap. xiv. 17 in a very striking manner. He has also devoted great attention to finance and taxation with the result that under his rule Babylon has become "the gold-exactress" of chap. xiv. 4. During his vigorous career he has penetrated far into the country of the Medes, and has annexed considerable districts of Media. It appears likewise from his annals that the Babylonians, not very long before, have also invaded Media. The incidental references in the prophecy to the political condition of the Medes correspond exactly with those which meet us in the records of Tiglathpileser. They are a "mighty" people under "mighty" chieftains; but they have no central government. So far they are only a congeries of clans "in the mountains," styled in the prophecy "the kingdoms of the nations"; but Jehovah has revealed to His prophet that they are destined to become the destroyers of the Babylonian power. Meanwhile, as regards the great tyrant himself, it is foretold that he will meet his death in battle and that his race will be cut off from Babylon. That Tiglathpileser died in battle is highly probable. His dynasty came to an end just five years after his death. For Babylon there is to be a near as well as a far-off judgment. Her site is to be overflowed with water. This was done by Sennacherib about a generation later. But she is also to become the haunt of "wild beasts of the desert," of wolves and jackals, and never more to be inhabited.[1] This lies in the bosom of the future and will not be completely fulfilled till many long centuries have rolled away.[2] As Tiglathpileser was not only the inventor of wholesale captivity, but also the first to take captive the Chosen People, it is no surprise to find introduced into the prophecy a promise of the return of the nation from captivity. This promise is made in terms particularly suitable to the age of Tiglathpileser, but not suitable to the era of the captivity. The general inference from all these findings is that the prophecy belongs to the Isaianic age, and that there is no good reason for impugning the title prefixed to it: THE BURDEN OF BABYLON, WHICH ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ DID SEE.

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[1] Jer. li. 42.

NOTE

The prophet threatens Babylon with utter desolation. Like the Edomite Bozrah, chap. xxxiv. 14, she is to become the haunt of *tsiyyim*, "wild beasts of the desert," animals that love to couch in dry and desolate places, and therefore frequent ruins. The threat is reiterated by Jeremiah, chap. i. 39. In the Assyrian Basement at the British Museum, in a series of bas-reliefs descriptive of the war of Ashurbanipal against his faithless brother Shamash-shum-ukin sub-king of Babylon, is one that represents a lofty fortress with triple walls and ramparts. On the uppermost rampart are seen wild animals prowling about: thus strongly reminding us of the language of these Scripture threatenings. The evident purpose of the artist is to depict a captured and deserted fortress standing on the bank of a river. This fortress from its imposing appearance has been supposed to be Babylon. But there is no evidence that Babylon was thus deserted after its siege and capture by Ashurbanipal. Can it be possible that the artist was drawing on his own imagination with a view to glorifying the exploits of his royal master?

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[1] See the Note at the end of this chapter.

[2] According to Koldewey the latest traces of human habitation on the site of Babylon may be assigned to about 1200 A.D. See *The Excavations at Babylon*, p. 314.

CHAPTER X

CHALDEAN PRINCES ON THE THRONE OF BABYLON

> "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
> The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride."—Isa. xiii. 19.

IT will be my object in this chapter to show how exactly the above description of Babylon answers to the historic position of that city at the time when Tiglathpileser became her king. Words, which exactly described her position at that moment, would have been altogether unsuitable in the time of Esarhaddon some fifty years later, when Babylon had ceased to be a Chaldean city and had come under the sway of the Assyrians. Our subject will serve to outline the earlier history of the Chaldeans from the time when they came into contact with Assyria down to the age of Tiglathpileser, and also to show where they lived, and the different tribes or kingdoms into which they were divided.

The Chaldeans or *Kasdim* of the Hebrew Old Testament appear in the Assyrian cuneiform records as the *Kaldi*. The original form of *Kaldi* was probably *Kasdi*, since according to a rule very common in the Assyrian language a sibilant before a dental is frequently changed into *l*.

With regard to the nationality of the Kaldi, Prof. Rogers assures us that they were undoubtedly Semites. He observes that "not only are their names purely Semitic, but their religion, manner of life, and adaptation to Semitic usages, all bear the same stamp, those of Semitic Babylonians."[1] Whence, then, did this mysterious people make their way into Babylonia? Probably from Arabia. According to Winckler: "Perhaps from the eleventh century B.C., possibly earlier, they pressed forward from the east of Arabia into Babylonia, where they pushed on from the south to the north, and by degrees overran the whole country. From this time forward Babylonia had a Chaldean population in the open country, which was under princes of their own, whilst to the old inhabitants, the Babylonians, only the towns remained with the territory belonging to them."[2]

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[1] *A History of Babylonia and Assyria*, 2nd ed., vol. i, p. 310. London, 1901.

[2] *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, by Eberhard Schrader, I Halfte, S. 22. Berlin, 1902.

For those of us who believe in the authenticity of the Books of Moses, the earliest notice of the Kaldi is to be found in the pages of Scripture. As early as the days of Moses, or rather of Abraham —see Gen. xv. 7—the very ancient city of Ur, near the then mouth of the Euphrates, was connected with this people. "Ur of the Chaldees" was the patriarch's early home; and the position of this old-world city, in the extreme south of Babylonia, almost on the shores of the Persian Gulf, and also near the western deserts, marks it as the spot, at which the Kaldi would obtain their first footing on the supposition that they came from the heart of Arabia. This very early connection with Ur teaches us to look upon the Kaldi as in some sense a nautical people, and helps to explain the language of Isa. xliii. 14: "Thus saith the Lord, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and I will bring down all of them as fugitives, even the Chaldeans in the ships of their rejoicing." It should also be borne in mind that Sennacherib in the account of his fourth campaign tells us how Merodach-baladan, the Chaldean king of Babylon, fled from before his arms in ships across the Gulf to Elam. As Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, it is possible, nay even probable, that the patriarch himself belonged to this people, and a fair argument for this conjecture may be made out as follows: In Gen. x. 22 we meet with a list of the sons of Shem, "Elam, and Asshur, and Arpachshad, and Lud, and Aram." In this list, as Hommel points out, Elam takes the place of Babylon, Babylon being then under Elamite rule; Asshur stands for Assyria, then in the infancy of her existence; whilst Arpachshad, *i.e. Ar-pa-keshad*, represents the Kaldi, being indeed an exact equivalent of the words "Ur of the Chaldees," since *pa* is nothing less than the Egyptian preposition "of."[1] Inasmuch, then, as Arpachshad figures in the genealogy of Abraham,[2] it is not so far-fetched to regard the patriarch as a Chaldee, of which, perhaps, we have a reminiscence in the name "Chesed," given to one of the children of his brother Nahor.[3]

The great interest of the subject must be my excuse for turning aside to this question as to the origin of Abraham. But without dwelling further on the early history of the Chaldeans, it will be sufficient for my present purpose to say that the VIIIth dynasty of Babylonian kings, which reigned from 1005 to 763 B.C.,[4] appears to have been a Chaldean dynasty: proofs of which I hope to give further on in this chapter. It was while this dynasty was in power that the Assyrians first came into contact with the Kaldi. In 879 B.C. the Assyrian king Ashur-natsir-pal conducted a campaign on the Euphrates. Leaving the city of Anat, the modern Ana, he ascended the river, and encountered, at the fortress of Suru, Shadudu the chieftain of the Shuhites.[1] Shadudu appears to have been a Babylonian vassal. Hence at the fall of Suru Ashur-natsir-pal captured, so he tells us, "fifty cavalry horses together with the soldiers of Nabu-apal-iddina, the king of Karduniash (the country round Babylon), and Zabdanu his brother, and Bel-apal-iddina the prophet who went in front of their army." Now the downfall of this fortress is represented by the Assyrian king as a great blow to the Babylonian power and to the Kaldi. "The fear of my sovereignty," he writes, "prevailed as far as the country of Karduniash: the might of my weapons overwhelmed the country of *Kaldu*. On the countries beside the Euphrates I poured out terror." [2] Such is the first clear mention of the Kaldi. We gather from it that they were settled at this time along the course of the Euphrates below the district of Karduniash, *i.e.* Babylonia Proper, and that they were under the rule of Nabu-apal-iddin, king of Babylon, who was probably a Chaldean himself. But for some such close connection with Babylon the fall of Suru could hardly have inspired them with terror, for Suru was at some distance from their country and Babylon lay between. At Suru, as the next line of the inscription informs us, the Assyrian king erected a trophy of his victories, with the record of which he closes the narrative of this year's campaign: thus clearly showing that he advanced no further down the river. What, then, had the Kaldi to fear, unless their fortunes had been in some way closely linked with those of Babylon?

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[1] *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, pp. 294–295.

[2] Gen. xi. 10–26.

[3] Gen. xxii. 22.

[4] *A History of Babylon*, by the late Prof. L. W. King, p. 321. London, 1919.

The second mention of the Kaldi occurs about a quarter of a century later, in 852 B.C., when Marduk-zakir-shum had succeeded his father, Nabu-apal-iddina, on the throne of Babylon. Owing to a dangerous rebellion, headed by his lame brother, Marduk-bel-usate, this monarch was led to call in the aid of the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III, the son of Ashur-natsir-pal. After successfully putting down the rebellion, and offering sacrifices at the shrines of Merodach and Nebo in Babylon and Borsippa, "I went down," writes Shalmaneser, "to the country of *Kaldu*. The torrent of my arms overwhelmed as far as the *nar Marrati*" *i.e.* "the bitter streams," or salt-water marshes at the head of the Persian Gulf, identical with the Merathaim of Jer. l. 21.[3] In the fuller account of this campaign, given in the inscription on the gates of Balawat, Shalmaneser names three of the kings of the Kaldi, viz. "Adini the son of Dakuri," "Yakin king of the Country of the Sea," and "Mushallim-Marduk the son of Amukkan."[1] These names are deserving of notice, for about a century later the inscriptions make mention of the Chaldean states of *Bit-Dakuri*, *Bit-Adini*, *Bit-Amukkan*, and *Bit-Yakin*. Comparing these names with those just given, it is seen that the small kingdoms of the Kaldi were called after the names of distinguished chieftains, just in the same way as the kingdom of Northern Israel was known as *Bit-Khumri*, "the House of Omri." A further inference is that they were capable of subdivision. Thus Adini the son of Dakuri seems to have divided Bit-Dakuri into two portions, one retaining the original name, and the other called after himself, Bit-Adini.

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[1] Job ii. 11.

[2] *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. ii, p. 164, lines 16–25.

[3] Obelisk Inscription, lines 73–84, *R.P.*, N.S., vol. iv, pp. 42–43.

To the four Chaldean states just mentioned must be added three others, viz. *Bit-Shilani* *Bit-Shahalli*, and *Bit-Sala*. To fix the exact whereabouts of these seven small principalities is beyond our power. According to Winckler, Bit-Dakuri was the most northerly and nearest to Babylon. Bit-Adini and Bit-Amukkan bordered on Bit-Dakuri, Bit-Amukkan lying on both sides of the Euphrates, and adjacent to the territory of the Puqudu, the Pekod of Ezek. xxiii. 23 and Jer. l. 21. South of these lay Bit-Shilani, Bit-Shahalli, and Bit-Sala.[2] Further south still, at the head of the Gulf and stretching down its western shore, was Bit-Yakin, "the Country of the Sea," the most famous of the seven. Thus while Sargon includes among the kingdoms of the Kaldi, Bit-Dakuri, Bit-Amukkan, Bit-Shilani, and Bit-Shahalli, he excludes Bit-Yakin, apparently because in his day this last had attained to such prominence under its famous monarch Merodach-baladan that it seemed to hold a position of its own.[3] To Merodach-baladan, therefore, he accords the title "king of Kaldu," as being overlord of all the Chaldean states.[4] Ashur-bani-pal also distinguishes between the land of Kaldu and "the Country of the Sea"[5] *i.e.* Bit-Yakin. The rulers of the states of the Kaldi are generally styled *sharrani*, "kings," just as their territories are spoken of as "kingdoms" in Isa. xiii. 19. In one passage Sennacherib calls them *nasikkani*, "princes."[1]

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[1] *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. iv, p. 79.

[2] H. Winckler, *Untersuchungen*, SS. 51–52. For the position of Bit-Amukkan as bordering on Pekod, see *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. ix, pp. 247–248.

[3] Grand Inscription of Khorsabad, lines 21–22.

[4] In the time of Tiglathpileser he was only "king of the Country of the Sea." In Sennacherib's first campaign he is called "king of Karduniash," for he was then seated on the throne of Babylon, in virtue of which position he was also "king of Kaldu."

[5] Rassam Cylinder, Col. III, lines 97–98.

Continuing to gather up the scraps of Chaldean history which meet us in the Assyrian annals, we notice that Shamshi-Adad V, king of Assyria 825–812 B.C., in his fourth campaign marched into Babylonia, and at Dur-Papsukal, a city which stood on an island in the Tigris, attacked and defeated Bau-akhi-iddina, a vassal king under Marduk-balatsu-iqbi king of Babylon, who shortly after arrived on the spot with a large army drawn from the countries of *Kaldu*, Elam, and Arumu. The fact that Kaldu stands first on this list is suggestive that Marduk-balatsu-iqbi was a Chaldean prince.[2] In 813 B.C., near the close of his reign, Shamshi-Adad undertook a second expedition into Babylonia. Bau-akhi-iddina, who by this time was seated on the throne of Babylon, was defeated by the Assyrian king and led captive to Assyria. At the same time, as we learn from another source, Shamshi-Adad, having offered sacrifices in the sacred Babylonian cities, went down to the land of the Kaldi, and received tribute of their "kings."[3] This was repeated by his son Adad-nirari III, 812–783 B.C.[4] After this we hear no more of the Kaldi till the time at which we are now looking, the era of Tiglathpileser the third of that name, 745–729 B.C.

The Babylonian wars of Tiglathpileser bear witness to the indomitable courage of the princes of the Kaldi. Thus is 745, to quote the words of the ruthless conqueror, "Bit-Shilani throughout its extent I broke like a potter's vessel. Sarrabanu, their great royal city, like a mountain wave I devastated, and carried away the spoil thereof. Nabu-ushabshi, their king, I impaled before the great gate of his city. His land, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his goods, the treasures of his palace, I took for a spoil. Bit-Amukkan, like a threshing instrument, I threshed the whole of its people, and the substance thereof I carried away to Assyria."[5] In a later expedition made in 731 Zakiru, prince of Bit-Shahalli, who had "sinned against the ordinances of the great gods," was thrown into chains and carried off to Assyria; but his people, rendered desperate by fear, fought it out to the bitter end.[6] In this year Bit-Amukkan for a second time encountered the might of Assyria. Its prince, Ukin-zer,[7] had but lately made himself master of the throne of Babylon. Having larger resources at his disposal, even as he had a greater issue at stake, he was able to hold out successfully in his fortress of Sapia. Meanwhile his palmgroves were cut down, his enclosures laid waste, and his cities burned with fire.[1] But it was not apparently till a second campaign two years later that this valiant foe fell into the hands of the conqueror.[2] However, it is no wonder that by this time to some of the princes of the Kaldi prudence seemed the better part of valour. Accordingly, while Tiglathpileser was besieging Sapia, Balasu of Bit-Dakuri, and Nadinu of Larak, brought their tribute. At the same time came " Merodachbaladan the son of Yakin, King of the Sea, who in the time of the kings my fathers had come before none of them, and kissed their feet," but who now, " cast down by the fear of Ashur my lord, came to Sapia into my presence and kissed my feet." [3] So writes Tiglathpileser, but the wily Chaldean prince was not overwhelmed by the glory of Ashur, as he would have us believe, but was only biding his time to rise up, seize the throne of Babylon, and for twelve long years defy the arms of Sargon, who according to Olmstead was " the greatest of Assyrian rulers." [4]

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, col. vi, lines 15–16.

[2] Monolith Inscription of Shamshi-Adad, col. iv, lines 22–40.

[3] Synchronous History of Assyria and Babylonia, Col. iv, lines 1–12. *R.P.*, N.S., vol. iv, pp. 33–34.

[4] Slab Inscription of Adad-nirari, line 22.

[5] Slab Inscription from Nimrûd, lines 8–12.

[6] Nimrûd Tablet Inscription, lines 19–21. *R.P.*, N.S., vol. v, p. 122.

[7] His full name was Nabu-mukin-zer. See King's *Babylon*, p. 321.

We have now obtained from scattered notices in the Assyrian annals evidence of some close relation existing between Babylon and the states of the Kaldi. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to showing that for long periods Chaldean princes were seated on the throne of Babylon.

Reference has already been made to the Babylonian dynasties. Attention was drawn to this subject by a very important tablet from Babylon, of which Dr. Pinches published a facsimile in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* for May 6, 1884. A translation of this tablet by Prof. Sayce will be found in *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. i, pp. 15–19. When entire it must have contained a complete list of the kings of Babylon, from the First Dynasty, whose sixth monarch Khammurabi was a contemporary of Abraham, down to the time when Babylon was captured by Cyrus. The names missing, where the tablet has been broken off, can in most cases be filled in from other sources, so that we have now an almost complete list of Babylonian kings from about 2225 B.C. down to 539 B.C.[5]

The first period of Chaldean rule over Babylon is covered by Dynasty IV, called on the tablet " the dynasty of Isin," which consisted of eleven kings, and is stated to have lasted 132 years[6] and

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[1] Nimrûd Tablet Inscription, lines 23–25.

[2] Babylonian Chronicle, Col. i, 19–21. *R.P.*, N.S., vol. i, p. 23.

[3] Nimrûd Tablet Inscription, lines 26–27.

[4] *History of Assyria*, p. 267.

[5] See King's *Babylon*, pp. 320–321.

[6] See Prof. King.

6 months, viz. from 1184 to 1052 B.C. Only four royal names of this dynasty survive on the tablet, the first and last of these being mere fragments; but five more have been recovered from other sources, and the whole nine have been arranged by Prof. King as follows:

1. Marduk-shapik-zerim.
2. . . . .
3. . . . .
4. Nabu-kudurri-utsur (Nebuchadnezzar I).
5. Enlil-nadin-apal.
6. Marduk-nadin-akhē.
7. Marduk-shapik-zer-mati.
8. Adad-apal-iddina.
9. Marduk-akhi-erba.
10. Marduk-zer . . .
11. Nabu-shum-libur.

The arguments for the Chaldean origin of this dynasty are threefold. In the first place, all the kings with two exceptions have one of the names Marduk or Nabu as an element in their names, the significance of which will be explained presently. Also with regard to the two exceptions, Enlil-nadin-apli and Adad-iddina (sometimes called Rimmon-bal-iddina), the former is only an apparent exception, since Enlil is the name of the supreme god, whom the Babylonians identified with Marduk; while the latter, according to the cuneiform Synchronous History of Babylonia and Assyria,[1] was a usurper, a man of no family, who had been raised to the throne by the Babylonians. Secondly, the fact that this usurper, despite his low origin, was able to marry his daughter to Ashur-bel-kala king of Assyria [2] is easily explicable on the ground that it was to the interest of Assyria to keep the throne of Babylon from the Chaldeans. But the third and most convincing proof lies in the fact that Nebuchadnezzar I calls himself in his inscription, Col. 1, 2, *tsi-it Babili*, "the offspring of Babylon," a term which, as we shall see, points to his being a Chaldean.[3] If, then, my supposition that the Fourth Dynasty was a Chaldean dynasty should prove to be correct, Chaldean princes must have seated themselves on the throne of Babylon early in the twelfth cent. B.C.

The second period during which the throne of Babylon was in the hands of the Kaldi is covered by Dynasties VIII and IX. It begins about fifty years after the close of the first period, and extends from 1005 to 730 B.C. The names of the kings of Dynasty VIII, though broken away from the tablet, have nevertheless been recovered in no fewer than eight instances, and their chronological sequence determined, by means of the Assyrian records. The order runs thus : [1]

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[1] Synchronous History, col. ii, lines 30–31. *R.P.*, N.S., vol. iv, p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.* vol. iv, p. 31.

[3] Eberhard Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, Bd. iii, S. 164.

Nabu-mukin-apal.
. . . .
Sibir
. . . .
Shamash-mudammik.
Nabu-shum-ishkun I.
Nabu-apal-iddina.
Marduk-zakir-shum.
Marduk-balatsu-iqbi.
Erba-Marduk.
Bau-akhi-iddina.
. . . .

The name Sibir is a fragment of a name and does not enlighten us. Of the other eight kings six have " Marduk " or " Nabu " as an element of their names. This is an indication, as stated above, that the dynasty before us is a Chaldean one, although it would be too sweeping an assertion to affirm that every king of Babylon, whose name contains the name of one of those deities, must be a Chaldean, seeing that even in Dynasty III—usually known as the Kassite Dynasty—we meet with Marduk-apal-iddina, the son of Meli-Shipak (" man of Merodach "),[2] who could hardly be looked upon as a Chaldean, unless his father were a usurper. What renders it still more likely that the above six kings were Chaldeans is the fact that the other two, Shamash-mudammik and Bau-akhi-iddina, appear to have been usurpers. Thus with regard to Shamash-mudammik, the Synchronous History informs us that he was slain by Nabu-shum-ishkun, his successor on the throne.[3] If, therefore, we assume the latter to have been a Chaldean, the probability would be that the former was a usurper. So, too, in the case of Bau-akhi-iddina. When he first comes before us in the inscription of Shamshi-Adad V,[4] king of Assyria, he appears as the vassal of Marduk-balatsu-iqbi,[5] and this latter king, from the fact that the Kaldi formed the first of his auxiliaries, may, as we have already seen, be presumed to have been a Chaldean. Bau-akhi-iddina, therefore, in whatever way he secured the throne, whether through the fickleness of the Babylonians or the interposition of the Assyrians, as far as the dynasty is concerned must be regarded as a usurper. The Chaldean nationality of Erba-Marduk is certified by the fact that Merodach-baladan claims him as an ancestor. Turning next to Nabu-apal-iddina and his son Marduk-zakir-shum, we note that it was the defeat of the former by Ashur-natsir-pal which, as already pointed out, overwhelmed with terror the country of Kaldu, thus arguing a racial connection between these two monarchs and the Kaldi.

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[1] King's *Babylon*, p. 321.

[2] *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. i, p. 33.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. iv, p. 32.

[4] The name is sometimes read Shamshi-Rammanu.

[5] Col. iv lines 24, 37. *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, Bd. i, S. 184.

The IXth Dynasty covers a period of 31 years, from 763 to 732 B.C. The succession of kings runs thus :

. . . . .
Nabu-shum-ishkun II.
Nabu-natsir (Nabonassar).
Nabu-nadin-zeri.
Nabu-shum-ukin.

Here the name of the first king is wanting. The other four names all contain the element " Nabu," and the last three are in the direct succession of father and son. This dynasty is called on the tablet " The dynasty of Babylon," a name which appears twice in the record of the Xth Dynasty, and signifies, as we shall see, that all four monarchs are Chaldeans. It is to this Xth Dynasty that we now turn ; and the record is so enlightening that I give it in its entirety, printing the names of the Assyrian kings in capitals, and those of the Chaldean princes in italics. It runs thus :

Ukin-zir of the dynasty of Sasi [1] for 3 (years).
PULU [2] for 2 (years) (Tiglathpileser III).
ULULĀ of the dynasty of Tinu for 5 (years) (Shalmaneser V).
Marduk-apal-iddina (Merodachbaladan) of the dynasty of the Country of the Sea for 12 (years).
SARGON for 5 (years).
SIN-AKHI-IRBA (Sennacherib) of the dynasty of Khabi the greater for 2 (years).
Marduk-zakir-shum the son of Arad . . . for 1 month.
Marduk-apal-iddina a soldier of Khabi for 6 months.
Bel-ibni of the dynasty of Babylon for 3 (years).
ASHUR-NADIN-SHUM of the dynasty of Khabi the greater for 6 (years).
Nergal-ushezib for 1 (year) (" Shuzub of Babylon ").
Mushezib-Marduk of the dynasty of Babylon for 4 (years (" Shuzub the Chaldean ").
SIN-AKHI-IRBA (Sennacherib) for 8 (years).
ASHUR-AKHI-IDDINA (Esarhaddon) for 12 years.
SHAMASH-SHUM-UKIN (younger brother of Ashurbanipal) for 20 years.
KANDAL [ANU] (Ashurbanipal) for [22 years].

On looking at the above list it will be seen that I have claimed all the kings of Dynasty X, with the single exception of Nergal-ushezib, as either Assyrians or Chaldeans. I have now to justify that claim. In the first place, then, Sennacherib speaks of Nergal-ushezib as "Shuzub of Babylon," whilst he calls his successor, Mushezib-Marduk, "Shuzub the Chaldean," so that the former must be looked upon as a native Babylonian, the latter as a Chaldean. But what is still more important we learn that by the term "dynasty of Babylon," given to Bel-ibni and Mushezib-Marduk, we are to understand a Chaldean dynasty to be meant. Hence the previous dynasty, Dynasty IX, which is thus described, must have been a Chaldean dynasty.[1] It would seem as though these Chaldean princes considered themselves Babylonians *par excellence*. Compare the language of the prophet Ezekiel, who, when speaking of the princes and nobles of the time of Nebuchadnezzar, designates them as "*the Babylonians, the land of whose nativity is Chaldea.*"[2] In the next place Ukin-zir, the first monarch of this dynasty whose full name was Nabu-ukin-zir, is the Chaldean prince of Bit-Amukkan, from whom Tiglathpileser wrested the throne of Babylon; that mighty monarch being here called by his Babylonian name, Pulu. Ululā is the Babylonian name of his son Shalmaneser V. Marduk-apal-iddina, the Merodachbaladan of Scripture, is the famous Chaldean prince, who for twelve years during the reign of Sargon held Babylon against the Assyrians. He appears a second time on the tablet as reigning for six months. This was early in the reign of Sennacherib. Why he is distinguished on this second occasion as "a soldier of Khabi" we do not know. Marduk-zakir-shum, according to Olmstead,[3] was a former official of Merodach-baladan. Bel-ibni was a nominee of Sennacherib, and Ashur-nadin-shum was a son of Sennacherib. Shamash-shum-ukin and Kandalanu were sons of Esarhaddon, Kandalanu being possibly the Babylonian name given to Ashur-bani-pal the older son.[4]

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[1] *For* Sasi *read* Sapi.

[2] The Pul of 2 Kings xv. 19, *i.e.* Tiglathpileser.

The mixed nature of the Xth Dynasty shows that after the time of Tiglathpileser and down to the end of the reign of Ashurbanipal Babylon could no longer be termed "the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride," though the designation would again be appropriate in the days of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. But when Tiglathpileser mounted the throne it was most appropriate, because, with a break of less than fifty years, it had then been in the hands of the Kaldi for four and a half centuries. It would thus appear that the description of Babylon given in Isa. xiii. 19 is very strongly in favour of that oracle having been written in the days of Tiglathpileser, and that we have every cause to trust the title in the opening verse of that chapter: "The Burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see."

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[1] In *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. i, pp. 13, 15 this same name, "the dynasty of Babylon," is given to the first of the Babylonian dynasties, which Hommel has shown to be of Arabian origin. This would tally with the view adopted by Winckler, and referred to above, that the Kaldi came in the first instance from Arabia. It would also tally with the designation of the birthplace of Abraham, who lived under this dynasty, as "Ur of theChaldees." Ur was in existence long before the time of Abraham, but it was not *then* "Ur of the Chaldees." In the days of the Ist Dynasty the names of the gods Merodach and Nebo do not yet form elements of the royal names. In those days a purer form of religion, as Hommel shows, appears to have prevailed. See *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, chap. iii.

[2] Ezek. xxiii. 15, R.V.M.

[3] *History of Assyria*, p. 284.

[4] See Olmstead, p. 477.

NOTE

The persistency with which Chaldean kings of Babylon chose names with "Nabu" and "Marduk" as elements for their children, may be illustrated from what we know of the family of Merodachbaladan. Merodachbaladan had five sons who bore the names, Nabu-zer-napisnti-lishir, Na'id-Marduk, Nabu-shum-ishkun-, Nabu-salim, and Iqisha-Marduk. He had also a grandson called Nabu-bel-shumate, and another grandson, Shuma-ai, whose name is evidently an abbreviation. It was from Merodachbaladan that the kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire were descended. According to Olmstead[1] Bel-ibni, the Chaldean viceroy of Babylonia appointed by Ashurbanipal, was a descendant of Merodachbaladan. "His father was Nabu-kudurri-utsur (Nebuchadnezzar), and it is all but certain that the greater Nebuchadnezzar, to use his Biblical name, was his grandson."[1] Now the kings of this Empire bore the following names:

Nabu-apal-utsur (Nabopolassar, founder of the New Empire).
Nabu-kudurri-utsur (the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar).
Amel-Marduk (the Biblical Evil-Merodach, son of Nebuchadnezzar).
Nergal-shar-utsur (Nergalsharezer, a usurper).
Labashi-Marduk (grandson of Nebuchadnezzar).
Nabu-na'id (Nabonidus, a usurper).

This list shows that the same rule continued to hold. The name of one of the gods, Nebo or Merodach, forms an element in the name of every king of the family of Nabopolassar in the New Empire. And the reason for this long-continued practice of the Chaldean rulers of Babylon is not far to seek. Merodach and Nebo were the patrons respectively of Babylon and the neighbouring city of Borsippa, and they were regarded by the native Babylonians as the bestowers of sovereignty. The sentiment was respected by the Chaldeans, who looked upon Babylon as the chief city in the world, and regarded its crown as the highest prize. In their eyes, it was—to quote the prophet's words—

"the glory of kingdoms."

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[1] Olmstead, p. 453.

CHAPTER XI

A HOSTILE DEMONSTRATION

"He shall sweep onward into Judah."—Isa. viii. 8.

WE have now reached the close of the era of Tiglathpileser III and his son and successor Shalmaneser V, and are passing on to the days of a fresh dynasty. The " rod " that smote Philistia has been " broken," but " out of the serpent's root," out of the hostile Assyrian power, there has " come forth a basilisk," which is destined to develop into " a fiery flying serpent." It is not necessary to assign these two figures to particular kings, *e.g.* to Sargon and Sennacherib respectively. The words may merely signify that the Assyrian menace will become ever more and more alarming. So far Jerusalem has remained as a vassal kingdom, unthreatened. Hamath, like Arpad, has fallen. Damascus has been captured, despoiled, and disfigured, some ten years ago ; and now the same fate has overtaken Samaria. But Zion on her sacred hill is still untouched. When did the dark cloud of Assyrian conquest first overshadow Jerusalem ? An answer to this question may perhaps be found in the strikingly realistic passage at which we are now to look.

The closing verses of the tenth chapter of Isaiah present us with a marvellously vivid picture of the rapid advance of an Assyrian army corps to the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The passage runs thus :—

> " He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron ; at Michmash he layeth up his baggage : they are gone over the pass ; they have taken up their lodging at Geba : Rama trembleth ; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim ! hearken, O Laishah ! answer her, O Anathoth ! Madmenah is a fugitive ; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. This very day shall he halt at Nob : he shaketh his hand at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem."

The short broken sentences of the above description fill the mind as we read them with a sense of agitation and alarm. We seem to hear message after message brought in, telling of the rapid advance of the dreaded invader. First, he is at Aiath; then, he has already passed through Migron. At Michmash, not to hinder his rapid advance, he has left his baggage. Anon it is reported that the deep pass of the Wady Suweinit—the scene of Jonathan's famous exploit (1 Sam. xiv.)—has been crossed, and that he has taken up his quarters for the night at Geba. Oh! the horrors of that never-to-be-forgotten night! There is no rest for any. The whole countryside is on the move. Cries of alarm resound from village to village. It is the same scene of frantic hurry that was witnessed when the German invader swept through Belgium. But what of the doings of the following day? He has advanced to Nob, and is now very close to Jerusalem. Is he going to attack the fortress? And if so, where is his material of war? Where are his battering-rams and siege-towers and scaling-ladders? Where are his sappers and miners, and the heavy-armed troops with their long coats of mail? How can a force of cavalry, who have left their baggage behind them, attempt the siege of a position so strong as Jerusalem? The answer is that no siege at all is intended. This is merely a hostile demonstration, carried out with a good deal of bluff and bravado, as may be clearly seen from the route chosen by the invader. Within the distance of a few short miles no less than four valleys, beginning with the steep descent into the Wady Suweinit, have had to be crossed before he comes in sight of the Sacred City. And all this, when by directing his course a little to the west he might so easily have availed himself of the main highway through the upland district, which runs through Bethel and Beeroth over comparatively level ground. We must understand, then, that all is done for the mere sake of effect; to alarm and surprise, to impress on Jerusalem that she must take care what she is about, that the might of Assyria is irresistible, the speed of her advance unequalled, and that if Judah dares to interfere with what is not her business she will do so at her peril.

The invader who thus threatens Jerusalem is not Sennacherib, but Sargon, and it is from the inscriptions of Sargon that we obtain the light which enables us to interpret this passage. The earliest inscription of this monarch is the Nimrûd Inscription, and from the events recorded on it, as well as from those not recorded, we gather that it was written in the year 714. In this inscription Sargon gives us a list or catalogue of his martial achievements in something like chronological order, though the order is not quite exact. Thus, the capture of Pisiri king of Carchemish in 717 is placed before the capture of Kiakki king of Tabal in 718, the dates in both instances being certified by the royal Annals. This trumpet-announcement of the Assyrian king's triumphs begins as follows:—"The exalted prince, who in the suburbs of Dur-ilu was seen fighting with Khumbanigash king of Elam, and wrought his overthrow: *subduer of the land of Judah, a distant region:* carrying away the land of Hamath," etc., etc. That is, the subduing of Judah stands second on the list, between the overthrow of Khumbanigash and the carrying way of Hamath. Now the annals tell us that Sargon's encounter with Khumbanigash took place in 721, and that in the following year at the battle of Qarqar he put down a dangerous rebellion of which the Hamathite king was the ringleader, and in which Arpad, Zemar, Damascus, and even Samaria—which had only been captured two years previously—were all involved. From the same source we also learn that after stamping out this rebellion with great severity Sargon advanced to the Egyptian frontier, where at the battle of Raphia he defeated Hanun of Gaza and the troops of Sib'i "the tartan of Egypt." As we know of no further military campaign in Palestine till the year 713, when Sargon sent his tartan to Ashdod, it is clear from the above that the subduing of Judah must have taken place in 720. From Hamath the Assyrian army must have marched to Gaza, probably by the usual coast route. But a force would no doubt be despatched to Samaria to restore order and punish the rebels in that city, and a cavalry detachment from this force may very well have been sent to overawe Jerusalem. This detachment, marching south from Samaria, might for the sake of a military surprise have left the main highway at Bethel and taken the road through Ai to Michmash, and then, in view of the hilly nature of the ground, may have thought it best to leave their baggage and press forward to make a reconnaissance of Jerusalem as well as a hostile demonstration.[1] This explains how it is that on reaching Nob the invader makes no preparation for battle. He does not intend to fight. He merely wishes to show himself, and thereby to intimidate Judah, and at the same time to reconnoitre her fortress and its surroundings. Whether he used any gesture or sent any threatening message we cannot tell: but by this daring surprise—the appearance of his horsemen on the heights at Nob—he shakes his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion as a man might shake his fist in the face of his foe.

Let it be further noted that the despatch of such a cavalry force is very characteristic of the military activities of Sargon.

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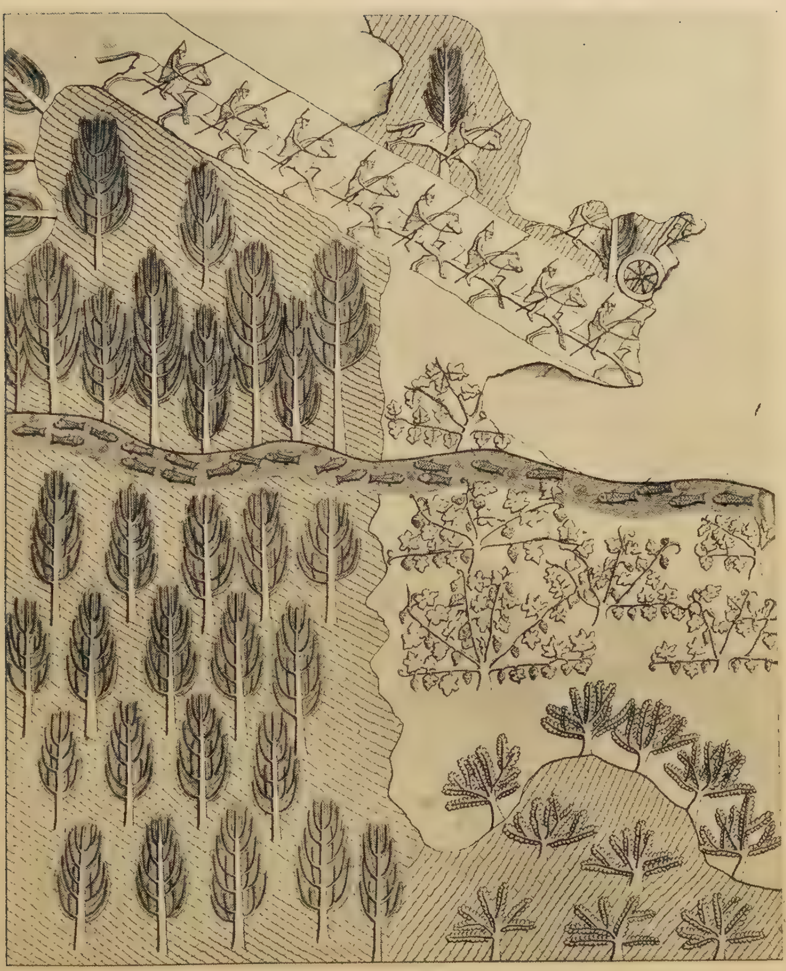
[1] See the note at the end of this chapter.



ASSYRIAN CAVALRY RIDING THROUGH WOODED HEIGHTS.

facing p. 106.

This king loved to make a dash at his foe with a small picked force of cavalry. Describing his march on Ashdod he thus writes: "In the rage of my heart I did not muster the main body of my army: I did not collect my munition of war. With my warriors, who do not retreat from the place whither I turn my hands, to Ashdod I marched."[1] Similarly in the unique tablet containing a detailed account of his expedition against Rusash of Ararat in 714 B.C. he gives us a very graphic description of how he made a sudden swoop at the foe. His army, so he tells us, were worn out by the fatigues of a very arduous march: but not so Sargon. "I did not muster my army," he writes, "those who were to right or left of me did not return to my side: I did not look back: I feared not the mass of his troops: I disdained his cavalry: his host of mail-clad warriors I would not look at. With merely my own chariot and the cavalry who march at my side, who are never separated from me in a hostile, unfriendly country, the troop and squadron of Sin-akhi-utsur, like a mighty javelin I fell upon him, I inflicted on him a crushing defeat, I put him to the rout."[2] The king who used such tactics would be the very man to act as described in the passage before us.

But we may still ask, Why does Sargon act thus? Because he has doubts about Judah's loyalty to her suzerain. Is she faithful to the compact made by Ahaz; or is she meditating revolt, looking to Egypt for help, and intending to act in concert with Hanun of Gaza and the forces under Sib'i? Such a demonstration as this may teach her that prudence is the better part of valour. It may be just in time to stamp out any treason that may be hatching. For the little kingdom of Judah, placed between two great powers, Egypt and Assyria, naturally looked for the most part to the nearer of the two for protection. Ahaz, indeed, when threatened by the combined forces of Israel and Syria, despite Isaiah's warning, had turned his eyes to Assyria and invoked the help of Tiglathpileser: but now that those kingdoms had ceased to exist, nothing was more natural for those who leaned only on an arm of flesh than to turn to Egypt, where the Ethiopian Dynasty was now in power and was showing a readiness to take the Palestinian states under its protection, witness the force under Sib'i sent to assist the king of Gaza in his rebellion against Assyria; it being always to the advantage of Egypt to use those states as buffer-states between herself and Assyria.

It was, then, to stop any attempt on the part of Judah to make common cause with Hanun and the Egyptian forces that Sargon made this demonstration against Jerusalem. He did not attack any of the fenced cities of Judah, or attempt any warlike operations: his cavalry merely swept through the country, no doubt plundering as they went. The brief notice in the Nimrûd Inscription makes no mention of any battle, capture of cities, or carrying away of captives and spoil, for there were no such triumphs to record, but only utters the vague boast of "subduing Judah," rendered slightly more effective by the addition of the words "a distant region." This explains how it came about that this somewhat paltry feat was not thought worthy to be inserted in Sargon's later inscriptions. Its inclusion, however, in the Nimrûd Inscription is matter for thankfulness because of the light which it throws on this very striking passage in the Book of the prophet Isaiah.

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[1] Grand Inscription of Khorsabad, lines 97–101.

[2] *Relation de la Huitième Campagne de Sargon* by Thureau-Dangin, pp. 22, 23.

Immediately after this passage come the words:

> "Behold the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the boughs with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one."

It has been questioned whether we are to join these words to the preceding context, inasmuch as the description of the swift incursion of the Assyrian cavalry is so realistic; and this, so highly figurative. But a strong argument for regarding them as a continuation of the prophecy is furnished by the appearance which those proud horsemen of the enemy must have presented as they stood silhouetted on the hills to the north of Jerusalem. Such a sight, whether seen by the bodily or the mental eye, might very easily lead Isaiah to change his style from the literal to the figurative, and to liken that hostile array to some stately cedar grove on the spurs of Lebanon. Whether this be so or not, it is impossible not to recognise a connection between the prophet's description of the felling of those giant cedars and the very striking contrast presented to our view in the opening verse of the next chapter:

> "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit."

Herodotus (Bk. VI, 37) has a story that Croesus once threatened the men of Lampsacus that unless they carried out his wishes he would destroy them like a fir. This threat much perplexed them, until one of their elders guessed its meaning, and told them that the fir when cut down never grows again but dies outright.[1] So, then, this juxtaposition of the predictions contained in Isa. x. 34 and xi. 1 is intended to signify that whilst the Assyrian is to perish utterly, the " shoot " out of the hewn stump of Jesse will presently spring up, bear fruit, and, as the context shows, grow into a sheltering tree. The lovely idyllic picture, presented in the following verses, of the fruit of the strictly just and well-ordered rule of the Messianic King is thus rendered still more lovely by its close proximity to the prophet's vivid portrayal of the scare and alarm, the violence, outrage, and measureless suffering caused by invasive war.

NOTE

In Cook's *Traveller's Handbook: Palestine and Syria* a description is given of the route from Jerusalem to Mukhmâs (Michmash), from which it appears that there are no fewer than four valleys to be crossed within a distance of a few miles: (i) the Cedron valley between Jerusalem and Olivet: (ii) the valley between Olivet and Anâta, the Biblical Anathoth: (iii) the valley between Anâta and Jeba, the Biblical Geba: (iv) the deep Wady Suweinit between Jeba and Mukhmâs. Michmash, where the Assyrian army are pictured as leaving their baggage, would probably be the frontier city of the Assyrian province of Samaria. The short distance of this spot from Jerusalem, only about seven miles, shows how easy it would be for the Assyrian to carry out such a demonstration along a route so unlikely, and therefore left altogether unguarded; in which the only difficulties to be encountered would be due to the hilly nature of the ground.

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[1] See *The Speaker's Commentary* on this passage.

CHAPTER XII

THE TROUBLES AT ASHDOD

"The year that the Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon king of Assyria sent him."—ISA. xx. 1.

OUR last chapter introduced us to Sargon, the founder of the last and greatest dynasty of Assyria's warrior kings. Of the dynasty which he founded Sargon was himself the ablest monarch: indeed he is regarded by some as the greatest of all Assyrian kings, though others would be inclined to give the preference to Tiglathpileser. For long ages the only mention of this great king was found in the opening verse of Isa. xx, which heads this chapter. Accordingly, the older Biblical commentators were much puzzled as to who Sargon could be. Was he Sennacherib? or Shalmaneser? or a successor of Shalmaneser and immediate predecessor of Sennacherib?[1] The mystery was at length solved when the first Assyrian palace, brought to light by the excavations of Botta at Khorsabad in 1842, proved to be the palace of Sargon, erected by him in his new city of Dur-Sargon; and it was presently seen that the last guess was the right one. Sargon has left us a perfect wealth of inscriptions, so that at the present time there is no period of Assyrian history better illustrated by contemporary monuments than the first fourteen years of the reign of Sargon. This will become very evident as I endeavour from the inscriptions of this king to throw some light on the troubles at Ashdod referred to in Isa. xx.

In the Assyrian Room (Second Northern Gallery) of the British Museum, and in wall-cases 9–13, are the fragments of one, or possibly two, broken cylinders, containing the annals of Sargon.[2] One of these fragments is unique, in that a portion of it, marked K. 4818, and bearing the library stamp "Palace of Sargon king of Assyria," is adorned with figures, so that we seem to have here an *édition de luxe* of the history of the day. But that which constitutes the chief interest of these shattered frag-

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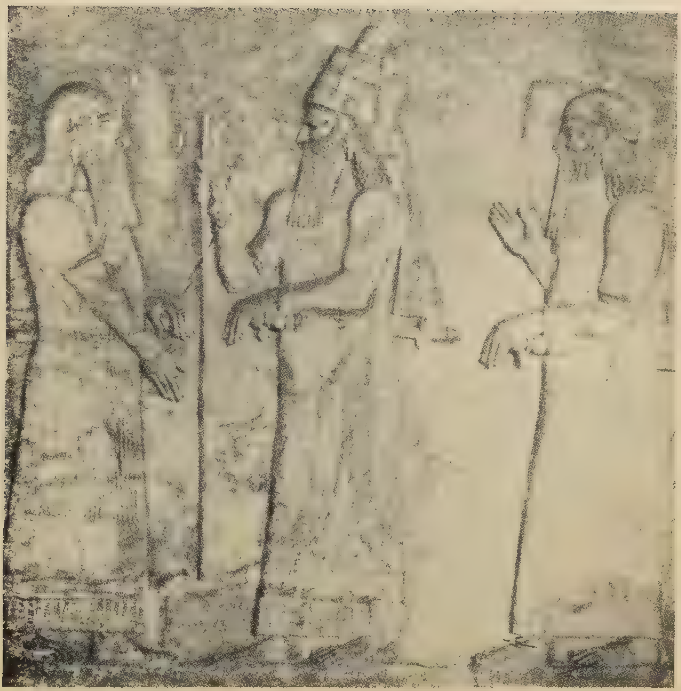
[1] See Pole's *Synopsis* on Isa. xx. 1.

[2] See *Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities*, p. 179.



SARGON AND HIS TARTAN.

facing p. 110.

ments in the eyes of the archaeologist and historian is that they furnish dates and details either not found in, or seemingly at variance with, the better-known Annals of Sargon written on the palace walls at Khorsabad.[1] Let us, then, pick out from the débris one particularly precious morsel—the fragment Sm. 2022, marked No. 4 on the floor of the case. Sm. 2022 is one of the larger of the small fragments, and has two inscribed faces. The longer face, with which we are concerned, is about 1½ inches in height, and has a dividing line drawn across it near the bottom. Immediately below this line, and somewhat to the left, there can be seen with the help of a magnifying-glass a group of nine cuneiform indentations arranged in three parallel horizontal rows. Even the uninitiated will easily understand that we have here a representation of the number "9." It is this group, then, which gives to the fragment its special interest, for it tells us, as I am about to show, "the year that the Tartan came unto Ashdod." Now since this coming of the Tartan, or Assyrian commander-in-chief, to Ashdod was the beginning of the Ashdod troubles, it may be well for me to place before my readers a literal translation of this fragment, not omitting the portion above the dividing line, which, as we shall see, has an important bearing on what follows. The fragment Sm. 2022 may, then, be translated thus :

> "as a spoil ....
> Matti, of the country of Atunâ,[2] who to [Mita of]
> the country of Muska [2] trusted ....
> the capture of Amris [3] and his spoiling ....
> saw, and his heart trembled. For [to pay]
> tribute to the yoke of the god Ashur [they sent]
> their envoy, who a message [of grace]
> to the country of Sikris in the country of Media
> to my presence brought, and kissed my feet." [2]
>
> ---
>
> "In my 9th year ....
> ....great ....
> ....Ashdod ...."

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[1] See *Die Keilschrifttexte* Sargons, by H. Winckler, vol. i, Introduction, pp. xi, xii.

[2] Atuna, or Tunna, the Dana of Xenophon's *Anabasis* and the birthplace of the philosopher Apollonius of Tyana, lay on the northern slope of the Taurus, from which a pass, called the Cilician Gates, led over into Cilicia. Muska is the Meshech of Gen. x. 2, and Tabal the Tubal of the same verse.

[3] Amris, or Ambaris, king of Tabal, was Sargon's son-in-law. He had received from Sargon the neighbouring province of Cilicia as a dowry along with his daughter. His subsequent rebellion called forth the bitter reproaches of the Assyrian king.

The above passage presents two difficulties. In the first place the portion above the dividing line, which must of course refer to Sargon's *eighth* year, records the capture of Amris and the sending of tribute by Matti and others to the king of Assyria in Media as taking place in that same eighth year; whereas in the better-known Annals from Khorsabad the capture and carrying off of Amris are set down under Sargon's *ninth* year, in which year also, as in our fragment, the Assyrian king is represented as carrying on a campaign in Media and the Far East. Now as the Annals in this portion reach us in *two* versions—viz. from Halls II and V of the palace of Khorsabad—there can be no mistake as to the correctness of the date given. Are we, then, to suppose the number "9" on fragment Sm. 2022 to be a mere slip of the pen? This also is out of the question. To form the number 9 the scribe had to make nine indentations. To form the number 10—which would make our fragment tally with the Khorsabad Annals—only one, or at the most two, indentations would be required.[1] Equally unlikely is it that the scribe who wrote Sm. 2022 should have been in ignorance of the exact date of the recent events he was recording. But the best proof that the "9" is neither a slip of the pen nor an error of ignorance is afforded by another small fragment, Sm. 2021, to be found in the same wall-case, and which Winckler justly regards as belonging to the same cylinder as Sm. 2022. This fragment, which is also marked with a dividing line, reads as follows:

> ...."together with their dwellings a heavy spoil I carried off"..
>
> ---
>
> "In my 5th year, which in..............................
> Assurli, king of the country of Karalla"..................

Here we notice a difference in the number of the year exactly similar to that in Sm. 2022, seeing that the revolt of Assurli of Karalla, here set down under Sargon's *fifth* year, is in the Annals assigned to the *sixth* year, no mention being there made of that king or of his country under the fifth year. The conclusion is thus inevitable, viz. first, that the fragments Sm. 2021 and Sm. 2022 are portions of one and the same text; and second, that the reckoning of time, supposing the year in either case to begin with the same month Nisan, is one year later than the reckoning adopted in the Annals. In other words, the Annals make Sargon's reign to commence in the year 722 B.C., styled the *rish sharruti* or

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[1] If a three-cornered stylus were used, it could be done with a twist of the instrument in one stroke, or at any rate without taking the stylus off the clay.

"beginning of the reign," 721 being regarded as the first year of the reign; whereas our cylinder, which after Winckler we will call Cylinder B, regards 721 as the "beginning of the reign," and 720 as the first year of the reign. From this conclusion we obtain the following remarkable result. The capture of Samaria is assigned by the Annals to the "beginning of the reign" of Sargon, *i.e.* to the last three months of the year 722, and it is recorded as the first event of the reign. But according to this new reckoning of time on Cylinder B *that event would not be included in the reign of Sargon at all, but would be looked upon as falling in the reign of his predecessor Shalmaneser V.* When, then, it is objected that in 2 Kings xvii. 3–6 the capture of Samaria—which took place in 722—appears to be assigned to Shalmaneser, though this is not exactly stated in so many words, we can answer that the sacred writer is no more at fault than the scribe who wrote Cylinder B, which from its ornate decoration may well have been intended for one of Sargon's palace halls!

The second difficulty in Sm. 2022 is connected with the mention of Ashdod in the part below the dividing line. According to the reckoning of time adopted on this fragment something must have happened at Ashdod at the beginning of Sargon's ninth year, *i.e.* at the beginning of the tenth year, the year 712 B.C., according to the better-known reckoning of the Annals. Now, when we turn to the Annals and examine the record of this tenth year, we find no mention whatever of Ashdod. Not till we come to the second and closing portion of the record for the eleventh year do we meet with the account of the famous campaign against that city. What, then, is the solution of this second difficulty? Simply this: that the mention of Ashdod on the fragment Sm. 2022 does not refer to the siege of that town, which, as just stated, forms the second and closing event in the record for the following year, but in all probability does refer to the first of those political events which led up to the siege, viz. the coming of the Tartan to Ashdod. To make this plain, I will now give the different accounts of the Ashdod imbroglio found in the inscriptions of Sargon, beginning with the one in the Annals (lines 215–228) already referred to, which runs thus:

> "Azuri king of Ashdod, not to bring tribute his heart was set, and to the kings in his neighbourhood proposals of rebellion against Assyria he sent. Because of the evil he did, over the men of his land I changed his lordship. Akhimiti his own brother, to sovereignty over them I appointed. The Khatte,[1] plotting rebellion, hated his lordship; and Yatna,

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[1] *I.e.* "men of the land of the Hittites."

> who had no title to the throne, who, like themselves, the reverence due to my lordship did not acknowledge, they set up over them. In the wrath of my heart, riding in my war-chariot,[1] with my cavalry, who do not retreat from the place whither I turn my hands, to Ashdod, his royal city, I marched in haste. Ashdod, Gimtu,[2] Ashdudimmu,[3] I besieged and captured. The gods dwelling therein, himself together with the people of his land, gold, silver, the treasures of his palace, I counted for a spoil. Those towns I built anew. People of the countries conquered by my hands I settled therein. My officers as governors over them I set, and with the people of Assyria I numbered them, and they bore my yoke.
>
> "In my 12th year Marduk-apal-iddina," [4] etc.

The above extract forms, as already stated, the second and closing portion of the record given in the Annals under Sargon's 11th year, 711 B.C., the earlier portion of the record for that year being occupied with the account of the expedition against Muttallu of Gurgum. In the Grand Inscription of Khorsabad we meet with a very similar account, containing a few fresh particulars. The usurper Yatna, *i.e.* "the Cypriot," is there styled Yamani, "the Ionian," thus showing that he was a Greek. We are also told that he fled away to Melukhkha on the border of Egypt, but was thrown into chains by the Ethiopian king and despatched to Assyria. Similar details are given in the Inscription from Hall XIV of the palace at Khorsabad. Other short notices are also to be found, first, in the Inscription on the Pavement of the Doors, No. IV, where Sargon is described as the hero:

> "who took Samaria and the whole land of Beth-Omri, who carried captive Ashdod,"

where the association of Samaria with Ashdod has no historical or chronological signification, but is purely geographical. Then, again, in the Bull Inscription this king is spoken of as:

> "carrying captive the princes of Carchemish, Hamath, Qummukh, and Ashdod, the wicked Khatte," etc.

One yet more deeply interesting, but sadly obliterated, account of the Ashdod troubles is found on the larger fragment marked K. 1668+D.T. 6, which reads thus:

> "from ....
> Akhimiti ....
> his own brother, over [them] ....

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[1] Lit. "the chariot of my feet."

[2] Possibly Gath.

[3] "Ashdod-by-the-Sea."

[4] The Merodach-baladan of Scripture.

tribute and gift ....
as of kings [former]..................................
on him I placed ....
The wicked people ....
not to bring tribute..................................
[they planned and] ....
their prince, revolt ....
....
they expelled him..................................
Yamani, a soldier..................................
to sovereignty over them [on the throne] ....
of his lordship they set [him, and] ....
their city ....
of battle ....
....
....
.... together ....
.. its environs, a moat ....
.... cubits in depth ....
they reached the underground waters. In order to . . . [the
peoples] of Philistia, Judah, E[dom and]
Moab, dwelling beside the sea, bringing the tribute [and]
gift of Ashur my lord ....
speaking seditions, acting with base wickedness,
who, in order to stir up rebellion against me, to Pharaoh
king of Egypt—a prince who did not save them,—[1]
brought their offerings of peace, and requested of him
an alliance. I, Sargon, the lawful prince,[2]
reverencing the oath of Nebo and Merodach, guarding
the name of Ashur, the Tigris and Euphrates,
when the surging flood was at its height, the flower of my army
as on dry land I caused to march through. Now he, Yamani,
their king, who to his own strength
trusted, and did not submit to my lordship,
the advance of my expedition from afar he heard of, and
the brightness of Ashur my lord overwhelmed him, and
............................of the bank of the river
......................................waters
....
.... distant
.... he fled
.... Ashdod."

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[1] Compare Isa. xxx. 5, 7.

[2] In allusion to the meaning of the name Sargon.

We have now surveyed the different historical texts bearing on the troubles at Ashdod, and it will be seen that they furnish us with a fairly circumstantial account of the sequence of events which led up to and ended in the siege and capture of that town. Piecing them together, we find that in the first place Azuri king of Ashdod deliberately refused to pay his wonted tribute to Assyria, and attempted to stir up rebellion amongst the neighbouring states. This led Sargon to depose Azuri, and set his brother Akhimiti on the throne. In order to effect this he must have despatched an armed force to Ashdod. It is in all probability the despatch of such a force, and the successful achievement of the end in view, which were recorded on the fragment Sm. 2022 below the dividing line. As Isa. xx. 1 informs us—and the statement, as we shall presently see, can be verified from contemporary sources—this first expedition to Ashdod was led by the Tartan. Possibly this may be the reason why it was not thought worthy to be recorded in the Annals under Sargon's tenth year, 712 B.C. But when we come to the eleventh year, 711 B.C., and the annalist very properly and suitably records the whole series of events leading up to the siege, two things at once strike us: first, that all these events could not possibly have happened in the single year 711 B.C.; and secondly, as stated above, that a force must have previously been despatched at the beginning of the troubles to accomplish the deposition of Azuri and the placing of Akhimiti on the throne. On the retirement of this force sedition must again have broken out in Ashdod, for it appears that the anti-Assyrian party were able, after a longer or shorter interval, once more to get the upper hand, to expel Akhimiti, and to set up in his stead a Greek adventurer, Yatna-Yamani. The town was then strongly fortified, and surrounded by a moat. This could easily be done, owing to the abundance of water from the hills of Judah, which finds its way to the sea under the plains of Philistia, a little below the surface of the ground. These are the "underground waters" of which Sargon speaks. Meanwhile, the news of what was going on at Ashdod appears to have reached the Great King at the beginning of his eleventh year, according to the reckoning of the annalist, viz. in the spring of 711 B.C., at a time when through the melting of the snows in Armenia the Tigris and Euphrates were at their height. So enraged was Sargon that, without waiting to collect a large force, he started off at once with a picked body of cavalry, crossed those rivers in flood, and marched with all speed to the disaffected province. Such at least is his own account; but I shall presently adduce reasons which lead one to think that he did not reach Ashdod as speedily as we might expect from the description of his march, but stopped on his way to put down a revolt in the country of Gurgum. In thus hastening to the West Sargon tells us that he was urged on by the intelligence that the whole of Southern Syria, including Judah, Edom, and Moab, as well as Philistia, was ripe for revolt, relying on ample promises of support from Pharaoh king of Egypt. His object, therefore, was to prevent a very dangerous rebellion, and in this, as he assures us, he was completely successful. For at the mere report of the advance of the Assyrian force, the adventurer Yamani fled to Melukhkha, leaving Ashdod and her daughter towns apparently a prey to the invader. If anything were wanting to complete this success, it was supplied by the action of the king of Melukhkha. Through the special grace of Ashur, Nebo, and Merodach, this monarch, whose ancestors from the remotest ages had never paid homage to Assyria, was so affected by the splendour of the arms of Sargon that he threw the fugitive into chains, and handed him over to the Assyrian king.

I have now to show from Assyrian sources, that, as stated in Isa. xx. 1, the first expedition against Ashdod in the year 712 B.C. was led, not by Sargon in person, but by his Tartan; and in doing this I shall hope at the same time to explain the reason why the Assyrian king deputed this business to his commander-in-chief.

In the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. xi, pl. iii, Prof. Bezold furnishes us with a copy in cuneiform of a fragment of a chronological list covering a considerable portion of the reign of Sargon. The events recorded on this fragment are set down in strict chronological order, and by a close comparison with the Annals we are able to assign them to the successive years of the reign. Accordingly, in presenting my readers with a translation, I have placed in the left-hand margin the successive years in which the different events took place, and in the right the corroborative references to the Annals as edited by Winckler. Flanked with these additions, our fragment reads thus:

B.C.	Events recorded.	Annals, lines of.
?	"................................... *ru* [1]	
?	.... he entered.	
718	.... Ta]-ba-la.	4th yr., 42–45.
717	.... *du karru* [1]	5th yr.
716	.... of Minni.	6th yr., 52–75.
715	.... prefects were appointed.	7th yr.
714	.... the town of Mutsatsir, Khaldia.	8th yr., 123–138.

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[1] Words untranslated are written in italics.

B.C.	Events recorded.	Annals, lines of.
713	...... the chief men in the country of Ellip.	9th yr., 139, 158, 166.
	.... he entered.	
	.......................the town of Mutsatsir.	
712	In the land.	10th yr., 176–208.
711	To the town of Marqasa.	11th yr., 208–214.
710	To the town of Bit-Zeri. The king was away in Kish.[1]	12th yr.
709	Sargon took the hands of Bel.	13th yr., 309.
	Qummukh was conquered : a prefect appointed.	13th yr., 388–401.
	The king departed from Babylon.	
	Dur-Yakin was destroyed.	13th yr., 358–359.
	Into their temples they (viz. the gods of the Bayblonian cities) entered.	13th yr., 363–364.
?	..........in the country of Karalla."	

To illustrate the above let me take the seventh line containing the words, " the town of Mutsatsir, Khaldia," to which I have prefixed the date 714 B.C. On referring to the Annals, lines 123–138, we find that in his eighth year, 714 B.C., Sargon made an expedition against Urzana of Mutsatsir, an ally and vassal of Ursa of Ararat. Urzana escaped, but the town of Mutsatsir was captured, and Khaldia, the national god, carried captive. Again in the twelfth line, to which the date 711 B.C. is prefixed, we read, " To the town of Marqasa." Marqasa was the capital of Gurgum, a state in Northern Syria. In 711 B.C., the very year of the fall of Ashdod, the Annals record an expedition to Gurgum just before the account of the Ashdod campaign. We are now in a position to explain the words in the eleventh line, " *In the land*." This is the phrase used in the chronological lists to denote that the king stayed at home in such and such a year, and did not lead his troops in person. As the dates 713 and 711, affixed respectively to the eighth and twelfth lines, can both be proved from the Annals, it follows that no other date than 712 can be affixed to these words " In the land." Let us see, then, how this deduction is borne out by the Annals.

Under the year 712 B.C., the tenth year of Sargon, the Annals (lines 178–195) record an expedition against Milid, the capital of the province afterwards known to the classical writers as Melitene. This expedition, to judge from the frequent use of the first person in the account given in the Annals, was led by the king himself. But this is a case in which we must not trust appearances. The kings of Assyria, in the language they use in their inscriptions, seem to have been guided by the motto, "*Quod facit per alium facit per se*," and indications are not wanting that such was the case in the present instance, seeing that the record of the Annals for this tenth year of Sargon is unique. The earlier portion, as in the previous years, is devoted to the king's warlike doings; but in line 196 an entirely fresh subject is introduced with the words, "At that time the treasures of the mountains of Khatte,"[1] and although the passage is partly obliterated, yet its purport is perfectly plain. The king is telling us how he amassed treasures of various kinds from the conquered countries, and he ends the recital with the words, "countless treasures, which my fathers had not received, within Dur-Sargon my town I heaped up." He is thus seen to be busy over his darling scheme,[2] the decoration of his new palace at Dur-Sargon, which is here mentioned for the first time. It was with this object in view that Sargon remained "in the land," *i.e.* at home, during the year 712, entrusting the first expedition to Ashdod to his Tartan, as stated in Isa. xx. 1.

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[1] A Babylonian town. The Annals represent Sargon as in Babylonia in 710.

Returning now to the text of Isa. xx, the words "and he fought against Ashdod and took it," are to be regarded as a parenthetical summing up of the whole course of events, including both expeditions against that city. This was seen by Ewald, who wrote prior to the discovery of the Assyrian monuments. The same great commentator has rightly judged the interval between the first coming of the Tartan and the final capture of the city to be referred to in the words of verse 3: "Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot, to be for three years a sign and a wonder," etc. (R.V.M.). To this important verse we shall presently return, but as our interpretation of it must necessarily depend in some measure on the construction we put on what precedes, it will be necessary to examine first the seemingly strange command given to the prophet in verse 2. "At that time," viz. the time of the Tartan's coming to Ashdod, "the Lord spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put thy shoe from off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot." To understand this command, it is necessary to note closely the terms employed. The prophet is told to *loose* the sackcloth *from off his loins*, implying that the garment spoken of was a long loose outer garment, which needed to be girded round the waist for active service: compare the common expression to be "*girded with sackcloth*." Had Isaiah's sackcloth been worn next the skin, we should expect to meet with the Hebrew idiom '*al habbasar*, "on the flesh," as in the description of the dress worn by Ahab when humbling himself before the Lord, 1 Kings xxi. 27, or Joram of Israel, who during the famine at Samaria wore "sackcloth within upon his flesh," 2 Kings vi. 30. Isaiah's sackcloth was doubtless the dark hairy garment worn by Old Testament prophets: compare 2 Kings i. 8 and Zech. xiii. 4. But if any doubt still exists on this point, it is at once set at rest by comparing the closing words of verse 2, "naked and barefoot," with the very significant addition made to them in verse 4. It thus appears that the term "naked" is here used in the same comparative sense in which we find it employed in other passages, *e.g.* 1 Sam. xix. 24, Micah i. 8, Jno. xxi. 7. Compare also 2 Sam. vi. 14 with verse 20 of the same chapter.

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[1] The Land of Heth, *i.e.* Syria.

[2] "Day and night," says Sargon in his Cylinder Inscription, "I pondered over the building of that town. . . . Day and night I planned and arranged to establish that town, to raise up sanctuaries, the dwellings of the great gods, and palace-halls, the abodes of my lordship and I gave orders for the building thereof."

To proceed to verse 3: in the R.V. and A.V. this verse reads thus: "And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and ['a' R.V.] wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia": but in the R.V.M. we read, "Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot, to be for three years a sign and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia," etc. The latter of these readings is the one favoured by the Hebrew accents, and there are several good reasons that can be urged for preferring it. In the first place, the symbolic act was meant to lend weight to the prophetic word that followed it. As, then, that word was once spoken, so the act that preceded it was once performed. Again, if we suppose the act to have been continued for a space of three years, then the explanation of it, contained in verse 3, must have been delayed for the same period; which seems most unlikely. Lastly, there is no suggestion in that explanation that the Egyptian and Ethiopian captives would be compelled to walk naked for that period. Hence *the three years must be taken to refer to the time that was to elapse between the prophetic word and its fulfilment:* Isaiah's symbolic act was "to be for three years a sign and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia."

The question next arises, How are we to explain the three years in view of the light thrown on the passage by the Assyrian records? In the first place the fragment Sm. 2022, by mentioning Ashdod so soon after the dividing line, gives us an indication that the Tartan came to that town *in the early part of the year, i.e.* in the early summer, since the year began on Nisan 1, approximately about the middle of our March. We may suppose, then, that in May or June of the year 712 B.C. the Assyrian commander reached Ashdod, that Azuri was then deposed and Akhimiti set up in his place, and that shortly after the Assyrians left. Before they had been long gone, we may imagine the hopes of the Egyptian party to have been stimulated by the arrival of a body of Egyptian and Ethiopian troops, despatched by that great power—centred far up the Nile, and therefore not easily accessible—which was now making itself felt all over Egypt, and threatening speedily to become no unworthy rival of Assyria. A general expectation would thus be aroused in the states of Southern Palestine that they might hope still to preserve their autonomy under the shadow of Egypt. It was to show the futility of such expectations that Isaiah was directed to preface his prophetic message with a symbolic act: "And Jehovah said, 'Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot, to be for three years a sign and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. And they shall be dismayed and ashamed, because of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabitants of this coastland shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and we, how shall we escape?'" That is, Assyria, and not Egypt, is about to have the upper hand, and the Assyrian king will show himself, not only bent on putting his foes to shame, but devoid of all pity for the young and respect for the aged. As we look at the representation on the Gates of Balâwât of captives being led away after this fashion, the Isaianic oracle seems to live before our eyes.[1]

But it may still be asked, How can the three predicted years between the sign and its accomplishment be fitted into the interval between the coming of the Tartan to Ashdod in the early summer of 712 and the capture of that city in the following year? In answering this question we have first to ascertain at what time of the year Ashdod was captured by the Assyrians. On the Ashdod Cylinder, Sargon informs us that he crossed the Tigris and Euphrates in flood, viz. in April or May, when the waters of those rivers are swollen through the melting of the snow on the mountains of Armenia. It would thus seem as if this second expedition to Ashdod were undertaken in the *spring* of the year

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[1] British Museum, Assyrian Saloon, basement: see Guide, pp. 51, 52.

711. Yet it is not a little remarkable that in the Annals, which are strictly chronological, this campaign is recorded, not as the first, but as the second and closing event of the year, being preceded by the campaign against Gurgum. How is this apparent discrepancy to be reconciled? A glance at the map will show us the way out of the difficulty. The country of Gurgum lies a little to the north-west of Carchemish, and therefore only slightly off the track of an army advancing to the West. It would, then, be a likely move, so one thinks, for the Assyrian king to set matters right in Gurgum, and put down the rebellion which had broken out there, before advancing south to Ashdod. Such a supposition would at any rate explain how it is that according to one account Sargon starts for Ashdod at the beginning of the year, when the snows are melting, whilst according to another, this Ashdod campaign is the closing event of the season and follows after the expedition against Gurgum. Now there are not wanting other indications that this was the course actually pursued by the Assyrian king. On the Grand Inscription of Khorsabad, lines 85, 86, the march to Gurgum is described thus: "In the rage of my heart, riding in my war-chariot, with my cavalry, who do not retreat from the place whither I turn my hands, to Marqasa"—the capital of Gurgum, represented by the modern Marash—"I marched in haste." Here it will be observed that the language used, except in one single instance,[1] is word for word identical with that in which the king describes his hasty march to Ashdod in line 220 of the Annals given above. Further, we note that in both instances the terms employed are highly dramatic, and at the same time strongly personal. Such expressions as "the chariot of my feet," "my cavalry who do not retreat from the place whither I turn my hands," leave no doubt upon the mind that both expeditions were undertaken by the king in person, whilst the similarity and all but identity of the language, coupled with the geographical situation of Gurgum and Ashdod relative to Assyria, lead us to think that these two expeditions formed part of one and the same campaign—that the Assyrian king went first to Marqasa in Gurgum, and then on to Ashdod—and that the reason why they are recorded as separate campaigns by the royal scribe is merely for the sake of effect, which may very well have been the case, seeing that the wrath of the Great King and the speed of his advance are described in a manner altogether so sensational.

But if Sargon thus subdued Gurgum on his way to the West, then it would be midsummer at the earliest before he reached Ashdod. What took place then? Yamani, according to Sargon's statement, had already fled at the mere report of the approach of the Assyrian army. But what of his royal city and the neighbouring towns? "Ashdod, Gimtu, Asdudimmu, I besieged, I captured," says Sargon. He would have us believe that these Philistine cities fell such an easy prey to his arms that one might apply to them the words of the prophet when he foretells the capture of the Assyrian strongholds in the last tragic crisis of the empire: "All thy fortresses shall be *like* fig-trees with the first-ripe figs; if they be shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater."[1] But there is no proof after all that the fall of Ashdod was so speedy. Ashdod, as its name indicates, was a very strong place.[2] The hill on which it stood is the highest spot for two and a half miles round. Dr. Thomson speaks of it as "this high and ample mound."[3] Herodotus calls Ashdod "a great city of Syria," and tells us that it was taken by Psammetichus after a siege of *twenty-nine years!*[4] We may feel incredulous as to the old historian's statement; nevertheless, it is significant as to the strength of the place. Further, on the present occasion, as Sargon tells us, the water defences had been recently seen to, and the men behind its walls were looking for help to the young, and seemingly vigorous power of Ethiopia-Egypt. It may be presumed then, that Ashdod did not fall quite such an easy prey as the conqueror would have us believe, and the more so as he declares that he hastened to attack it without waiting to collect his war material. It fell, indeed, within the year, *i.e.* before the first day of Nisan (March-April) 710, but we should be inclined to place its fall some time in the early winter or even later.

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[1] In the Khorsabad Inscription *shukhut* "rage," takes the place of *uggat* "wrath" found in the Annals.

We are now in a position to discuss the three years which were to elapse between the giving of the sign and its fulfilment. The sign was enacted and the prophecy uttered probably at the time of the Tartan's visit or shortly after, *i.e.* about midsummer 712 B.C. Ashdod fell, as I imagine, some eighteen months later, in the winter of the following year. How can this interval be spoken of as three years? The answer lies, first, in the Jewish mode of reckoning time, according to which parts of years are spoken of as whole years; and secondly, in the arrangement of the Jewish civil and economic year. In 1 Kings xxii. 1 we read of three years without war between Syria and Israel, while the very next chapter tells us that war broke out again in the third year. Our Saviour speaks of His body as about to lie three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, whereas, according to our mode of speech, He lay in the grave one whole day and parts of two others. So, then, the eighteen months between the summer of 712 B.C. and the winter of 711 B.C. would count as three years, if it could be shown that this period embraced *one whole year and parts of two others.* Now it appears from Exodus xxiii. 16 that the end of the civil and economic year of the Jews fell after the autumnal ingathering of the fruits. Hence the Feast of Tabernacles is called " the feast of ingathering at the end "—or " outgoing "— " of the year, when thou gatherest in thy labours out of the field." This ecomonic or agrarian year commences on the first day of the month Tisri (September-October), which is still called in the Jewish calendar *Rosh Hashanah* " the Beginning of the Year." On the supposition, then, that this civil year is the one referred to in the prophecy, it is plain that the interval which separated the giving of the sign and the prophecy which accompanied it from its fulfilment in the fall of Ashdod would, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, be justly described as three years, seeing that it embraces one civil year—viz. from Tisri 712 B.C. to Tisri 711 B.C.—and parts of two others ; for my contention, as stated above, is that the Tartan came to Ashdod before Tisri 712 and that Sargon captured the city after Tisri 711.

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[1] Nah. iii. 12.

[2] The name Ashdod, from the root *shâdad* "to be strong," signifies "a stronghold." The modern village of Esdûd lies on the slope of a low hill commanded by a higher hill, which was formerly the citadel.

[3] *The Land and the Book*, 1st Edn., p. 541.

[4] Bk. ii, 157.

The prophecy concerning the approaching fall of Ashdod was addressed doubtless by Isaiah to his own people, but when he speaks of the dismay which the capture of that fortress would occasion to " the inhabitants of this coastland," we must understand him to be speaking, not of Judah only, but of the states of Southern Palestine generally. Indeed, the best commentary on his words is to be found in the inscription on the fragment K. 1668+D.T. 6, given above : " [The peoples] of Philistia Judah, E[dom, and] Moab, *dwelling beside the sea,* bringing the tribute [and] gift of Ashur my lord . . . speaking seditions, acting with base wickedness, who, in order to stir up rebellion against me, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, *a prince who did not save them,* brought their offerings of peace and requested of him an alliance."

CHAPTER XIII

ETHIOPIA AND EGYPT

> "Princes shall come out of Egypt:
> Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands unto God."—Ps. lxviii. 31.

THE twentieth chapter of Isaiah introduces us to the newly-risen power of Ethiopia-Egypt. Ashdod is seen to be garrisoned with Ethiopian and Egyptian troops who are about to be led forth as captives by the king of Assyria, and the inhabitants of Southern Palestine are pictured as "dismayed and ashamed because of Ethiopia their expectation and of Egypt their glory."

The rise of the Ethiopian-Egyptian power began very soon after the rise of the New Assyrian Empire under Tiglathpileser III in 745 B.C., and its fall was the result of the establishment of Assyrian rule in Egypt in 666 B.C. This power is the Egypt which comes before us in the Book of Isaiah. This is the Egypt with which Hoshea the last king of Israel intrigued and so brought about the downfall of his kingdom. It was with this Egypt that the last dynasty of Assyrian kings struggled long and hard for the supremacy, and at length for a brief period were crowned with success. For when the Assyrian armies penetrated up the Nile valley as far as Thebes in 663 B.C., then, so far as Egypt was concerned, the Ethiopian dominion ceased, and the Saite Dynasty, at first under the patronage of Assyria, took its place.[1] The Pharaoh-neco of Jer. xlvi. 2 and the Pharaoh Hophra of Jer. xliv. 30 were respectively the second and the fourth monarchs of that dynasty, and it was the grateful Saites who endeavoured to bolster up Assyria at the time of the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

The Ethiopian rulers of Egypt had their capital at Napata on the Nile, a little below the Fourth Cataract and at the foot of

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[1] The capture by the Assyrians of Thebes, called No-Amon "the city of the god Amon," is alluded to in Nah. iii. 8-10, where Nineveh is warned that she is no better, *i.e.* no more likely to be able to resist her foes, than this famous city which she has so lately taken.

Gebel Barkal, the Sacred Mountain, a sandstone cliff which rises to a height of nearly 200 feet and in which the god Amon was supposed to have his dwelling. They were priest-kings, of Egyptian royal and priestly race, and their worship was copied from the worship of Amon at Thebes; in fact, their ancestors appear to have been emigrants from Thebes, who to escape persecution had gone up the Nile in the days of the XXIst Dynasty; and as far as hereditary right goes they were probably the true kings of Egypt. Pionkhi I, king of Ethiopia *ca*. 748–725, established his power in Upper Egypt at Thebes. At the beginning of his reign Egypt was divided among several princes, no fewer than sixteen rulers bearing sway in the Delta. But about 740 B.C. Tafnakhti, a man of obscure origin, succeeded in bringing under his rule the princes of the Western Delta. He then crossed over to the right bank of the Nile and captured Heliopolis. This led the princes of the Said and the Delta, who still remained unconquered, to call in the help of the Ethiopian power. Whereupon Pionkhi, using Thebes as his base, advanced northward, captured Memphis, and overran Lower Egypt. About 725 Pionkhi was succeeded on the throne of Ethiopia by Kashta, who was probably his son. It was during the reign of Kashta that Hoshea king of Israel, about 725 B.C., " sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and offered no present to the king of Assyria as he had done year by year ":[1] an act of defection which led to the three years' siege of Samaria by the Assyrians and the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom. The Hebrew characters, read " So," should probably be read " Sĕvĕ." So-Sĕvĕ is the Sib'i of the Assyrian records, who was defeated by Sargon at the battle of Raphia on the Egyptian frontier in 720 B.C. Sargon styles him " tartan of Egypt," *i.e.* commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army. He is to be identified with Shabaka the son of Kashta, who succeeded his father in 715. The name " Shabaka " according to Petrie signifies " the male wild-cat," the final syllable *ka* being merely the Indefinite Article, so that this ruler would be called familiarly *Shaba*, answering to the Assyrian *Sib'i* and the Hebrew *Sĕvĕ*. In 2 Kings xvii. 4 So-Sĕvĕ is called " king of Egypt," probably because he acted as viceroy of Egypt under his father the king of Ethiopia. For so vast was the territory under the Ethiopian kings—reaching nearly a thousand miles up the Nile—that they were forced to place Egypt under the viceroyalty of one of their sons, in the same way that in a previous age, when Ethiopia was under Egypt, the Egyptian kings appointed a " royal son of Cush " (Ethiopia) to rule the country south of Assouan.

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[1] 2 Kings xvii. 4.

When Shabaka succeeded to the throne of Ethiopia in 715, he deemed it politic to send presents to Sargon of Assyria, and the clay impress of a seal, bearing the name and figure of Shabaka, and attached doubtless to a form of treaty—since there is also stamped on the clay the figure of the Assyrian king—has been found at Nineveh.[1] Despite, however, these peaceful overtures, Shabaka intrigued with the kings of Southern Palestine, and the Ethiopians and Egyptians who helped to garrison Ashdod in 712 were troops sent by Shabaka. As has been already said,[2] the Ethiopian monarchs hardly meditated the invasion of Assyria, but they sought to hold Palestine within their sphere of influence, and to use its small kingdoms as buffer-states against the onset of the Assyrian power.

Shabaka was succeeded in 707 B.C. by his son Shabataka. In this name, according to Petrie, *ka* is the Definite Article and *to* the Egyptian for "son," so that the name signifies "the son of Shabaka." This king was on the throne in 701 at the time of Sennacherib's invasion, when he sent his cousin Taharqa, the Tirhakah of Isa. xxxvii. 9, to command the Egyptian army in Palestine. Tirhakah was either co-regent with Shabataka, as Petrie holds, or else he is called "king of Ethiopia" in that passage by anticipation.

Our subject has now brought us down to the age of Sennacherib and the time of his invasion of Judah, and has prepared the way for a study of the oracle addressed to Ethiopia in Isa. xviii. The reason for this remarkable oracle is undoubtedly to be found in the fact that Shabataka was straining every nerve to collect troops from all parts of his vast dominions in order to resist the advance of the Assyrian, since he knew quite well that Sennacherib was aiming not so much at the subjugation of Judah as at the invasion of Egypt, which had so lately come under the sway of Ethiopia. In this as in some of his other visions Isaiah finds himself transported mentally to the scenes which he describes, and tells us what he sees going on there. In the present instance he is thus transported far up the Nile and on to the furthest confines of distant Ethiopia. It is in this way that by describing a feature characteristic of its southern portion he brings before us the vastness of the Ethiopian kingdom. It is the land of "the rustling of wings," or, as some render the expressive Hebrew term employed, "the whirring of wings," the true home of insect life, lying "beyond the rivers of Ethiopia"; beyond the point where the Atbara, its latest tributary, flows into the Nile; beyond even the junction of the Blue and the White Nile at Khartoum.

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[1] Cf. Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 156, footnote.

[2] Chapter I p. 8.

The description of a country by its physical features is characteristic of the prophet Isaiah. As he describes the desert between Egypt and Palestine as the haunt of lions, and vipers, and fiery flying serpents, so he describes Southern Ethiopia as the land of insects. And how true his description is, may be gathered from the accounts of modern travellers. Thus Captain Percival, speaking of the region through which the Bahr-el-Ghazal, a tributary of the White Nile, flows, tells us that "the tsetse fly occurs almost all over the district, and often very badly."[1] Whilst with regard to the Dinka country on the right bank of the Bahr-el-Gebel, another tributary of the White Nile more to the east, the testimony is still more emphatic. "Probably no country in the world," writes Major J. S. Hamilton, "possesses a greater wealth of insect life than this, or one more inimical to man and all his works. The tsetse fly is mercifully absent from the whole district, but mosquitoes swarm during most of the year both by day and by night. Biting flies of all shapes and sizes pursue the traveller throughout the cattle areas, while as for the common housefly no words can do justice to his numbers and persistency. Biting ants, termites, scorpions, centipedes, and their like, are more numerous and more savage by disposition than in any other portion of the continent with which I am acquainted."[2] Such is the description of the vast region which formed the southernmost portion of Shabataka's widespread dominions. But our oracle is only concerned with that fly-infested district so far as it suggests the vastness of the Ethiopian realm and the almost boundless resources of its king. For as the Nile draws its waters from an immense tract in the heart of Africa, so from that same wide area does the Ethiopian monarch collect his troops. It is the muster of these troops that the prophet now sees going on in Egypt. "Ambassadors," or rather "posts," are being despatched hither and thither by the "sea," *i.e.* on the waters of the Nile, called here "the sea" as in Nah. iii. 8. They traverse its waters in "vessels of papyrus": those same light barks, which are seen so often portrayed on the walls of Egyptian tombs and which are still used in Abyssinia. They were made of bundles of reeds, lashed together and prolonged into a rostrum, which rises gently above the horizontal level at the prow and bends sharply upward at the stern, forming boats flat-bottomed, and keel-less, fairly broad in proportion to their length. These are the craft which the prophet sees scudding hither and thither on the waters of the Nile, executing the behests of the Ethiopian

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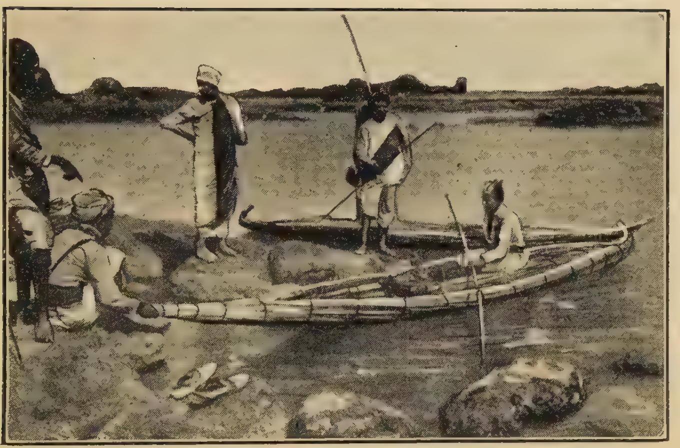
[1] Royal Geographical Society's *Journal*, vol. xxx (1917).

[2] *Ibid.* vol. lvi (1920).



"VESSELS OF PAPYRUS," ISA. XVIII.2, AS STILL USED IN ABYSSINIA.

facing p. 128.

monarch, and it is this busy, bustling scene which explains the tone of kindly irony in which the prophecy begins: "Ah! the land of the rustling of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia": as though he would exclaim, "That vast empire, which is now worked up to fever heat, and all to no purpose!" For this surely is the thought that is in his mind as he goes on to address the busy marshals of the Ethiopian king in these words: "Go, ye swift messengers"; *i.e.* as the rest of the sentence shows, "Go back to your own people," "to a nation tall and smooth, to a people terrible from their beginning onward; a nation that meteth out and treadeth down"—or rather "a strong, strong nation and all-subduing"—"whose land the rivers divide!" Isaiah has seen the Ethiopians and knows something about them. He no doubt saw them at the time of the siege of Ashdod, but his words betray a closer acquaintance. We may, therefore, conjecture that an Ethiopian embassy has been at Jerusalem, and that our statesman-prophet has conversed with them through an interpreter. In any case he has taken note of their splendid physique and noble bearing, their manly form and glossy skin; for Herodotus tells us that they were "the tallest and handsomest men in the whole world." So much, then, for their outward appearance. From a political point of view Isaiah can speak of them as "a people terrible from their beginning onward," inasmuch as their rise to such a height of power has taken place within his own lifetime. Perhaps, too, we may see in his words an allusion to the sternness with which Shabaka has put down the rule of Bocchoris the son of Tafnakhti, the sole representative of the XXIVth Dynasty, who is said to have been either burnt or flayed alive by his captor. Not that the Ethiopians were a cruel race: far otherwise. Piankhi, when he advanced through Egypt on his conquering career, was ever ready to show mercy to his foes. The one person who pitied the prophet Jeremiah when he lay in the filthy dungeon was Ebedmelech the Ethiopian.

In contra-distinction to Egypt with its one great river, Ethiopia is spoken of by the prophet as a land divided by rivers, the many tributaries in its upper course of the lordly Nile. To this land the Ethiopian envoys, now so busy on the Nile, are bidden to return. There is no need for all this stir. Let them go back to their own land and keep a diligent look-out: nay, let "all the inhabitants of the world," all the "dwellers on the earth" be on the *qui vive*, for a great spectacle is at hand, a standard round which to rally is about to be "lifted up on the mountains," the mountains of Palestine. To quote the words of an earlier prophecy which throws a strong light on this passage, "Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying: Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him underfoot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulder. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations." Again, making use of another figure, our prophet bids the Ethiopians, and indeed the whole world, to listen as well as look: "when the trumpet is blown, hear ye." A great trumpet-signal will shortly be blown: just such a signal as that of which we read in chap. xxvii. 13, "It shall come to pass in that day that a great trumpet shall be blown;" but whilst the reference there is to the signal for the return of the Jewish captives and exiles, he is pointing here to the signal for the Assyrian hosts to muster on the mountains of Palestine.

But how, it will be asked, does Isaiah know all this? He is in direct communication with Jehovah, who has made to him a startling revelation: "For thus hath Jehovah said unto me, I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling place; like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest," in the heat which brings on the harvest—the Hebrew word rendered "harvest" being here used of the fruit harvest as in chap. xvi. 9. Jehovah, working quietly, gradually, and all unseen, without any singular, or extraordinary manifestation of His power, will send the clear heat by day and the heavy dew by night, which are intended to bring on the vintage. The prophet's language is clearly parabolic, and its meaning is that Jehovah will go on working in the world of Nations just as He works in the world of Nature. The vine of the prophet's parable, which is to blossom and go forward until the flower becomes a ripening grape, represents, first, the Assyrian's design, and secondly, the Assyrian host itself. The Assyrian's design is to subjugate Palestine, as barring the road to his projected conquest of Ethiopia-Egypt. This design, under Jehovah's overruling providence, will go forward smoothly and successfully for a while. It will ripen towards completion, and appear to be on the point of being shortly realised. In the words of the parable, "the blossom is over and the flower becometh a ripening grape," though the fruit harvest has not yet actually arrived. In the light of the historic fulfilment, Sennacherib's plans will be allowed to prosper for a time. He will be allowed to subdue Phoenicia, to capture all the fenced cities of Judah, and it will seem as though in a few weeks' time Jerusalem must perforce surrender to his arms or be taken by storm, and so the harvest of his hopes be realised. But just before this expected fruition, all of a sudden the Unseen Power will strike in, and strike down the Assyrian vine. "He shall cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks, and the spreading branches shall he take away and cut down." Then, in words of terrible import, in which figure barely veils fact, the prophet goes on to tell the immediate outcome of that terrible disaster: "They shall be left together unto the ravenous birds of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth, and the ravenous birds shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them." Here is a threat of twofold import: there will be a terrible loss of life as in some great battle, and there will also be the taking of a great prey, for the mountains around Jerusalem have indeed become "the mountains of prey."[1] It is the same threat which we find repeated in chap. xxxiii. 1: "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee. When thou hast ceased to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou hast made an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee."

The close of the Isaianic oracle predicts the effect that will be produced on Ethiopia-Egypt by this overthrow of the Assyrian. "In that time," adds the prophet, "shall a present be brought unto Jehovah of hosts of a people tall and smooth, and from a people terrible from their beginning onward; a strong, strong nation, and all-subduing, whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts, the mount Zion." Isaiah declares that the Ethiopians, overcome by this astonishing exhibition of the might of Jehovah in thus overthrowing their enemies, will bring their present to His chosen dwelling-place. Similarly the writer of the 76th Psalm, after telling of that same terrible overthrow, calls on the neighbouring nations to pay tribute and homage to the great God who dwells in Zion:

> "Vow, and pay unto Jehovah your God:
> Let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared."[2]

Shabaka, at the beginning of his reign, had sent his present unto the Assyrian king; but now Ethiopia has realised the presence of the true World-ruler dwelling in Zion, and is stretching out her hands unto God.[3] For the primary fulfilment of these predictions we may point to the record of 2 Chron. xxxii. 22, 23: "Thus Jehovah saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria. . . . And many brought gifts unto Jehovah to Jerusalem, and precious things to

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[1] Ps. lxxvi. 4.

[2] Ps. lxxvi. 11.

[3] Ps. lxviii. 31.

Hezekiah king of Judah : so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from thenceforth."

Let us note, further, that this present to be received from the Ethiopians will not consist merely in " the labour of Egypt and the merchandise of Ethiopia," [1] but will include something far nobler, viz. a band of men selected from their nation, the tallest and the finest, who are henceforth to be dedicated to the service of the house of God in Jerusalem. This present is the " present of a people," not merely a present of their wealth : it is the foreshadowing of the truth contained in the apostle's words when writing of the generosity of the Macedonian Christians, he says, " first they gave their own selves to the Lord." In the 87th Psalm, which may very well be referred to the occasion of the deliverance of Jerusalem from the arms of Sennacherib, we seem to see in verses 4–6 an allusion to homage done to Jehovah by the neighbouring nations sending their representatives to be enrolled among the Nethinim as servants in His temple.[2] This is very happily expressed in Keble's version of the Psalm with which I close this chapter.

God's foundation towers for ever,
  On the holy mountain towers ;
Zion's gate the Lord will favour
  More than Jacob's thousand bowers.

Glorious deeds are all thy story,
  God's eternal tower and mount !
Rahab now, and Babel's glory
  With my votaries I will count.

Mark ye well Philistia's region,
  Tyre, and where the Cushites [3] roam ;
There was born yon holy legion,
  Thence to find our God they come.

Now of Zion shall be chanted,
  " Saint, on saint, in her they spring :
His own arm her wall hath planted,
  Her eternal glorious King."

God shall say, His tribes enrolling,
  " Here he sprang, mine own was he."
Swell the song, the dance controlling :
  " All my fresh springs are in Thee."

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[1] Isa. xlv. 14.

[2] The Nethinim, whose name means " given," *i.e.* to the service of Jehovah, were of foreign origin, as is evident from the list of strange names which meets us in Ezra ii. 43–58.

[3] Cush, the Biblical name of Ethiopia, is the Egyptian *Kaushu*.

NOTE

The Ethiopian Rulers of Egypt

The sequence of these rulers runs thus: [1]

Pionkhi	748–725 B.C. or later.
Kashta	725–715.
Shabaka	715–707, regent as early as 725.
Shabataka	707–693.
Taharqa	693–667.

The first four are in direct succession, if, as seems probable, Kashta was the son of Pionkhi. Taharqa, the Tirhakah of Scripture, was the cousin of Shabataka.

The Ethiopian rulers had two capitals: Napata, the natural capital of arid Northern Ethiopia, the land of caravan routes and of the gold mines which supplied Egypt: Meroe, the capital of Southern Ethiopia, 400 miles up the Nile above Napata and within the region of tropical rainfall. Southern Ethiopia is a land of agriculture, grazing, and market-places. From their capital, Napata, the Ethiopian rulers of Egypt governed the whole of the Nile basin from the marshes of the White Nile to the Mediterranean Sea. About 300 B.C. the seat of power was shifted from Napata to Meroe. The rulers, whose names are given above, all lie buried in the cemetery at El Kur'un, except Taharqa, whose pyramid, the greatest in Ethiopia, is found in the cemetery at Nuri.[2]

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[1] The dates are those given in Petrie's *History of Egypt*, vol. iii, pp. 278–279.

[2] So G. A. Reisner in the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* for 1923, pp. 34–77.

CHAPTER XIV

MERODACHBALADAN

"Leviathan the crooked Serpent."—ISA. xxvii. 1.

ATTENTION has been drawn in Chapter X to the large place occupied by Chaldean princes in the lists of the Babylonian kings. Of these princes, Merodachbaladan, the one who figures most prominently in the Assyrian records, whose name has found a place on the page of Scripture, and who is now believed to have been a direct ancestor of the great Nebuchadnezzar, will form the subject of the present chapter. I shall endeavour, in the first place, to trace the history of this prince from the cuneiform inscriptions, and then, turning to the Sacred Record, to study the narrative of Isa. xxxix. and the prophecy which forms its conclusion.

In the Assyrian inscriptions Merodachbaladan is described as the "son," *i.e.* descendant or successor, "of Yakin": his kingdom is called Bit-Yakin "the house of Yakin":[1] and his capital, Dur-Yakin "the fortress of Yakin." These names are taken from a certain Yakin, the founder of his royal line, who was a contemporary of Shalmaneser III of Assyria. In the inscription on the Gates of Balâwât Shalmaneser states that he marched to the sea-coast, viz. in 851 B.C., and received tribute of Yakin the king of the Country of the Sea. *Mat Tamtim,* "the Country of the Sea," is another name for Bit-Yakin, which we often meet with in the cuneiform records. It was the most southerly of the Chaldean states, and lay at the head of the Persian Gulf.

Merodachbaladan was not the first of his family to sit on the throne of Babylon. Among his immediate ancestors are reckoned Erba-Marduk (800–760 B.C.) and his own father Nabu-shum-ishkun (760–747), who was the predecessor of Nabonassar. Merodachbaladan first appears on the scene in the days of Tiglathpileser, at the time when that monarch was fast making

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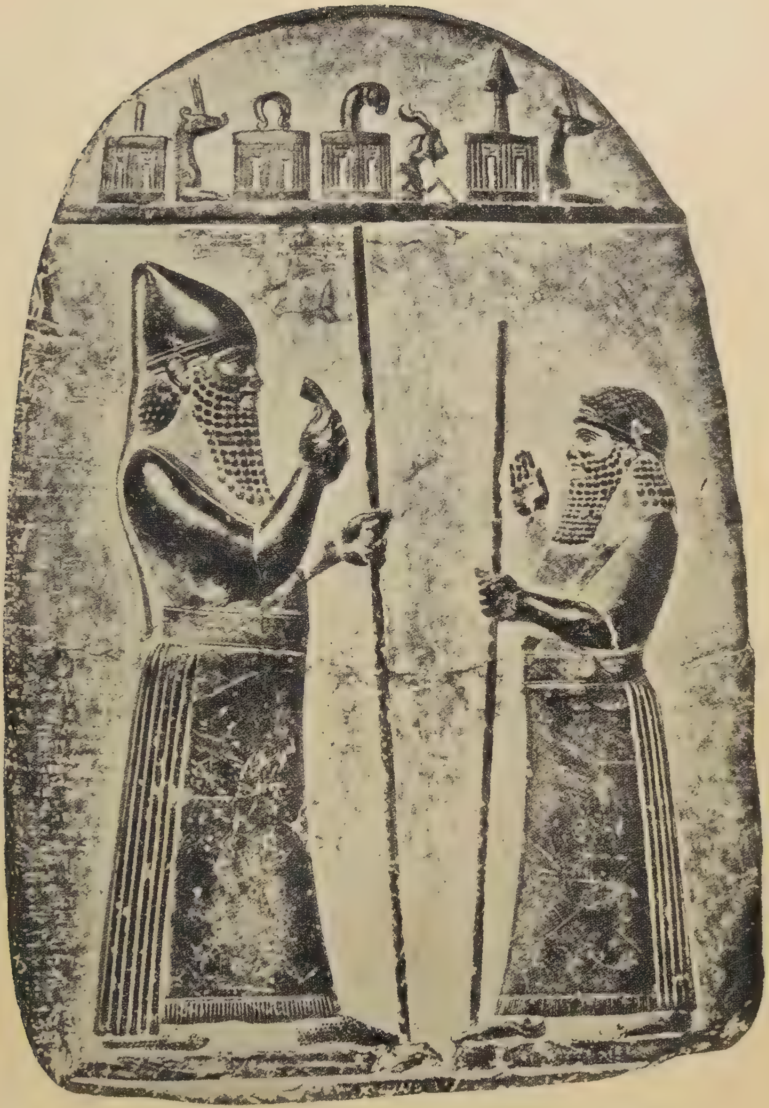
[1] Compare Bit-Khumri, "the house of Omri," the name given by the Assyrians to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes.



MERODACH BALADAN II.

facing p. 134.

his way to the throne of Babylon, which he and his son occupied in succession from 729 to 722 B.C. Describing his expedition to Babylonia in 731, Tiglathpileser writes thus: "Marduk-apal-iddina, king of the Sea, who in the times of the kings my predecessors had never appeared before any of them, overwhelmed by the fear of the brightness of Ashur my lord, came before me at Sapîa and kissed my feet. Gold, the dust of his land, in abundance, implements of gold, necklaces of gold, precious stones the product of the sea (pearls ?), etc., etc. . . . I received as his tribute."[1] What most strikes us in the above recital is the surprising wealth of this Chaldean prince. For the Country of the Sea was a marshy district with comparatively few towns: yet Tiglathpileser speaks of it as a kingdom in which gold was as plentiful as dust.[2] Whence, then, this amazing wealth? We can only suppose that it was obtained by commerce, either inland with Arabia, or by sea with Ophir, the gold region of Africa; for the Chaldeans, it must be remembered, were a maritime people.[3] Also, we seem to see in this mention of gold, and vessels of gold as forming so important a part of the tribute of Merodachbaladan the germ of the Golden Kingdom, the first of the Four Monarchies in the vision of Daniel chap. ii. As can be shown both from his inscriptions as well as from the pages of Herodotus, the use of gold for decorative purposes was a distinctive feature of the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. In the eyes of Merodachbaladan, however, wealth must also have meant power, since it formed undoubtedly one of the secrets of his success. Without it he would never have been able to get together those vast armaments which enabled him to oppose the hosts of Assyria, or to find wherewith to satisfy the covetousness of the Babylonian priesthood.

When the usurper Sargon mounted the throne of Assyria in the winter of 722 B.C., Merodachbaladan, seizing the opportunity offered by the troubles arising from a change of rulers, was able in Nisan (March–April) the first month of the year, to take his seat on the throne of Babylon. Here he remained in possession for twelve long years, 721–710 inclusive. It is true that at the beginning of this period Sargon, like Tiglathpileser before him, made as his first campaign an expedition to Babylonia, but found himself stopped on the way by the king of Elam.[4] After this, the insurrection in the West and the threat of Ararat in the North prevented the Assyrian from ousting his rival. At last in 710 B.C. Sargon was free to march against his foe. To the account of this campaign he devotes no fewer than 140 lines of the Annals. In the Khorsabad Inscription, where the story is more briefly told, the recital begins with the statement that "Merodachbaladan the son of Yakin, king of Chaldea, a wicked demon, who feared not the name of the lord of lords (Merodach), trusted to the Bitter River, the power of the flood (*i.e.* to the waters of the Persian Gulf), and withheld his tribute." The passage shows that the Chaldean looked upon the sea as his friend, either as enabling him to flood his country, or else as offering him a way of escape to Elam when he found himself hard pressed by his foe. In marching against Merodachbaladan, Sargon's first object was to cut him off from his Elamite ally. This he accomplished so successfully that the Chaldean judged it prudent to abandon Babylon and make his way to Elam as best he could, sending on in advance a present to the Elamite king. "The honest Elamite," Sargon ironically remarks, "accepted his gifts and avoided my weapons, stopped his march, and ordered him not to advance. On hearing the words of his ally, he threw himself on the ground, rent his clothes, lifted up his voice, and wept aloud." After such a disheartening repulse the only way left to the fugitive was to fall back on his ancestral kingdom. Meanwhile Sargon entered Babylon and was warmly received by the fickle townsfolk, with whom he strove still further to ingratiate himself by very costly gifts made to the gods—in this way competing with his rival—by building the famous double rampart known as Imgur-Bel and Nimitti-Bel, and by digging a new canal for the bark of Nebo to come from Borsippa to Babylon at the New Year festival. At that festival the Assyrian king took the hands of Bel, and thus legitimised his claim to the throne of Babylon. Then in the following month he set out for Bit-Yakin. Meanwhile his foe had been employing the interval in strengthening the defences of that fortress with a broad moat drawing its water from the Euphrates. This, we are assured, offered no obstacle to the Assyrian, who caused his soldiers to fly over the water like eagles. A battle was then fought outside the town, in which the Chaldean was defeated and compelled to fly for refuge within his fortress walls, leaving behind him his royal tent, golden couch, golden throne, golden spear, silver chariot, and golden canopy.[1] Dur-Yakin was then besieged and captured, but the prime object of the expedition was unattained. The family of Merodachbaladan and his possessions fell into the hands of the conqueror, but that prince, though wounded, found the means to elude his foe. During the remaining four or five years of Sargon's reign we hear no more of Merodachbaladan, but with the accession of Sennacherib in 705 B.C. this persistent antagonist was able for a second time to seat himself upon the throne of Babylon for six, or more probably, nine months. Hence it came about that Sennacherib's first campaign in 703 was directed against "Marduk-apal-iddina, king of Karduniash (the district round Babylon), a rebel at heart, seditious, bent on revolt, whose guilt is heavy." On this occasion Merodachbaladan by rich gifts had secured the help of the king of Elam, who sent him an army of 80,000 bowmen,[1] under his two "tartans" and ten commanders. He had also, according to Sennacherib, mustered all the Chaldeans, the Arameans, and the whole of Karduniash, together with an Arab contingent under the brother of the Arabian queen.[2] Very vividly does Sennacherib describe the spirit in which he went to the encounter; how he "raged like a lion," and "like a mighty bull" went on ahead of his army. The great battle was fought at Kish to the east of Babylon, and resulted in a victory for the Assyrians. Merodachbaladan's palace at Babylon with all its treasures fell into the hands of the conqueror, but the Chaldean himself found a hiding place in the marshes, and once more baffled his pursuers. Before leaving Babylon Sennacherib placed on the throne Bel-ibni, who had grown up "like a young hound" in his palace. Making due allowance for bombast and self-glorification on the part of his rival, it is manifest that Merodachbaladan must have had immense resources at his command to gather together so vast an army, and that as on the former occasion his guiding motto was

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[1] Tiglathpileser, Nimrûd Tablet Inscription, Obv. lines 26, 27.

[2] In the Amarna Letters Dusratta of Mitanni (Mesopotamia), writing to the king of Egypt, says, "In the land of my brother gold is as plentiful as dust."

[3] Isa. xliii. 14.

[4] Babylonian Chronicle, col. i. 33–35.

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[1] According to the Annals most of these articles were of silver.

"He that fights and runs away
May live to fight another day."

In 700 B.C., the year after his campaign in Judah, Sennacherib made a second expedition against Merodachbaladan, and it is quite possible that the "rumour," which according to Jehovah's promise would cause him to return to his own land,[3] was the rumour of some fresh intrigues and activities on the part of his indefatigable rival. On his way to Bit-Yakin Sennacherib overthrew "Shuzub the Chaldean, who dwelt in the marshes," a prince who like Merodachbaladan was destined to give further trouble. Before the Assyrian could reach the land of his foe, to use an expression very like his own, "the bird was flown." "Merodachbaladan, whose overthrow I had accomplished in the course of my first campaign and had shattered his forces, feared the thunder of my mighty arms and the onset of my terrible battle. He gathered together the gods of his whole land, embarked them on ships, and fled like a bird to Nagite-rakki, which is in the midst of the sea." We are then told how the Chaldean had left behind him on the shore his brothers and the remnant of his subjects, and that Sennacherib carried them off with him after devastating his cities. It was in the course of this campaign that Sennacherib also removed and carried back to Assyria Bel-ibni, who had proved a failure, placing in his stead on the throne of Babylon his own eldest son Ashur-nadin-shum.

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[1] Isa. xxii. 6 and Jer. xlix. 35.

[2] Luckenbill, *Annals of Sennacherib*, pp. 48–55.

[3] Isa. xxxvii. 7.

Ashur-nadin-shum reigned over Babylon for six years, 700 to 694 B.C. In his sixth campaign Sennacherib made a third expedition against Merodachbaladan. The people of Bit-Yakin, so he informs us, had gathered their gods together and followed their prince across the Gulf to Elam. What was the Assyrian to do? He was no sailor, and his people knew nothing about the sea, but he bethought him of the captives whom he had taken in the West during his third campaign. With the help of Tyrians, Sidonians, and Cypriotes ships were built, navigated down the Tigris to Opis, conveyed thence overland—probably by sledges and rollers—to the Euphrates, and down that river to the sea. Sennacherib himself followed their course by land as far as the mouth of the Euphrates. Here, so he tells us, "the mighty waves of the sea came up and entered my tent, and they completely surrounded me while in my camp." His troops, meanwhile, were cooped up for five days and nights on board ship, "like being in a big cage." This experience was enough for the cautious monarch, so after meeting his men on the shore of the Bitter Sea, *i.e.* the Persian Gulf, and offering sacrifices to Ea the god of the deep, viz. a ship of gold, a golden fish, and a chain of gold,[1] he appears to have entrusted the rest of the campaign to his generals. These, landing on the coast of Elam, defeated the Chaldeans on the banks of the Ulai,[2] and brought back the fugitives and their gods. As no express mention is made of Merodachbaladan in the account of this campaign, it is a question whether he was still living. While Sennacherib's troops were rounding up the fugitive Chaldeans on the coast of Elam, the Elamite monarch executed a counter-movement by invading Babylonia and carrying off Ashur-nadin-shum to Elam. This was undoubtedly one of the factors which presently led to Sennacherib's ruthless destruction of Babylon. In these last two campaigns against Merodachbaladan and his fugitive subjects, the mention of the gods of Bit-Yakin, first as being carried over the sea by that prince, and then as being brought back by Sennacherib along with their worshippers, seems to emphasise the strong religious tendency of the Chaldeans. Similarly in the Book of Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean is seen to be a deeply religious man, albeit an idolater, and his inscriptions tell the same tale, for they record not his victories but the temples built by him. Further, when Herodotus was in Babylon rather more than a century after the time of Daniel he speaks of the temple of Bel as in the hands, not of the native Babylonians, but of the Chaldeans. It is also worthy of notice that, as stated in Chapter X, the names of Merodach and Nebo appear as elements in all Chaldean royal names. The fact that the former was the patron god of Babylon and the latter the patron god of Borsippa—a suburb of Babylon—not only shows the direction which their devotions took, but also indicates the claim put forward by them to the throne of Babylon. In the family and descendants of Merodachbaladan I am not aware of a single individual whose name was without either a "Merodach" or a "Nebo."

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[1] Compare and contrast with this Xerxes' treatment of the Hellespont. Hdt. v, Bk. vii 35 and 54.

[2] Bull Inscription, No. 4.

That Merodachbaladan was not unpopular during his twelve years' reign at Babylon may be gathered from the inscription on the Merodachbaladan Stone,[1] now in the Berlin Museum, in which he claims that he set himself to work to restore to his subjects in Sippar, Nippur, Babylon, and the towns of Akkad (N. Babylonia), the lands which had been violently taken away from them by the soldiers of the enemy, *i.e.* the Assyrians, in the unsettled times; alluding no doubt to the period immediately previous to his reign, when Babylon was under Assyria.

We have now sufficiently traced the career of Merodachbaladan and may turn to the narrative of Isaiah xxxix. "At that time," so the record runs, "Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick, and was recovered." "At that time"—in my introductory note on the Date of the Accession of Hezekiah I have placed that event in 721 B.C., so that his illness, which happened fourteen years later as may be gathered from a comparison of 2 Kings xx. 6 with 2 Kings xviii. 2, would thus fall in 707. In that year, near the close of the reign of Sargon, Hezekiah like his father Ahaz was still a vassal of Assyria, and Merodachbaladan was trying to induce him to form a secret alliance. Probably it was not till the accession of Sennacherib in 705 that in view of the strong coalition forming in Babylonia he ventured to cast off the Assyrian yoke. But although still a professed servant of the Assyrian, he had almost from the beginning of his reign been under grave suspicion. As far back as 720, in the year after his accession, his conduct had led Sargon, as we have seen, to sweep through Judah with his cavalry and shake his fist at Jerusalem. Then again in 711, at the time of the fall of Ashdod, Sargon speaks of Judah and the neighbouring states as secretly plotting rebellion. Hence in 707 Judah was certainly under a cloud, and although professedly still a vassal state was threatened sooner or later with invasion and ultimate absorption into the empire. At the same time it is true that in 707 Merodachbaladan was not on the throne of Babylon. His first and longer reign over that city extends from 721 to 710 inclusive, his second brief reign of six or possibly nine months belongs to the year 704. How then can he be spoken of as " king of Babylon " in the year 707 ? First, in virtue of what he had been and was yet again to be. But more probably, I think, because he was viewed by many at the time as Babylon's rightful king. His immediate ancestors had occupied the throne of that city for over half a century, while Sargon was a mere adventurer with no claim whatever, and instead of being a member of one of the Chaldean princely families was their avowed foe. But if Merodachbaladan had been forced to quit his throne and was in some sense a fugitive, how came Hezekiah to be so flattered with the overtures made to him by this prince ? A close attention to the historical records of the period will supply an answer to this question. Though not seated on the throne of Babylon in 707, the influence of this ruler was still very great, and he must have been scheming to form that vast coalition with which, as stated above, he encountered the arms of Sennacherib only four years later.[1] His object was to induce Hezekiah to join the league against Assyria.

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[1] A relief on this Stone depicts Merodachbaladan making a grant of land to Bel-akhi-erba, governor of Babylon.

Merodachbaladan is called in the Scripture narrative the "son," or successor, " of Baladan." Baladan is an abbreviated name, signifying " has given a son," the name of some god being left out at the beginning. Such abbreviated names were in common use : *e.g.* Sennacherib calls Mushezib-Marduk " Shuzub the Chaldean," and Nergal-ushezib " Shuzub of Babylon." [2] Had

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[1] For the vastness of the preparations made by Merodachbaladan the reader is referred to *The First Campaign of Sennacherib*, by Sidney Smith of the British Museum.

[2] Similarly Josephus speaks of Merodachbaladan as Baladan. *Ant.* x, 2. 2.

Merodachbaladan, then, any royal ancestor of renown whose name might be thus abbreviated? It seems that he had; for in the VIIIth Dynasty of which his immediate ancestors Erba-Marduk and Nabu-shum-ishkun were members, appears the name of Nabu-apal-iddina, who reigned from 885 to 855.[1] This king was followed by his two sons and then comes the name of Erba-Marduk, during a part of whose reign, as stated above, Bau-akhi-iddina set up as a usurper. It is thus not unlikely that Nabu-apal-iddina was a direct ancestor of Merodachbaladan. Further, he was in some sense an ancestor to be proud of, for, if not a warrior king, he had at least done well by his country in establishing friendly relations with Shalmaneser III of Assyria, and in subduing the roving Sutû—a semi-nomad tribe of Arameans living beyond the Euphrates. His name has also come down to posterity as the rebuilder of the famous temple of the Sun-god at Sippar.[2] Sippar is, in fact, a link between these two rulers; for Merodachbaladan on his Stone twice makes mention of his subjects in Sippar, Nipur, and Babylon, placing Sippar first,[3] thus showing the same respect for the seat of the Sun-god that Nabu-apal-iddina showed when he restored the temple. Thus we may correctly say that Marduk-apal-iddina, *i.e.* Merodachbaladan, was a true "son" of Nabu-apal-iddina, *i.e.* Nebobaladan, whose abbreviated name would be Baladan.

The avowed purpose of Merodachbaladan's embassy was to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, and according to a rule of court etiquette, which existed in the days of the Amarna correspondence, they brought with them a royal letter and a present. A second avowed purpose was "to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land,"[4] viz. the retreating of the shadow on the sun-dial of Ahaz—the sign given to Hezekiah of his recovery. This would form a suitable pretext on the part of the ruler of a people well known to be much interested in the movements of the heavenly bodies. But the real reason of this embassy, as stated by Josephus[5] and as already shown, was to form an alliance against Assyria with a king whose power was on the increase and who was known to be disaffected. In this secretive policy on the part of her ruler we seem to see the explanation of the symbol employed to denote the Babylonian power in Isa. xxvii. 1. In his policy, no less than in his strategy, Merodachbaladan is the "crooked," or "winding serpent,"[6] gliding hither and thither, evasive, elusive, escaping detection, and baffling his pursuers. It is consistent with his line of policy to hide his real purpose under plausible pretexts.

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[1] See Chapter X, p. 100.

[2] *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. viii, 164 ff.

[3] Merodachbaladan Stone, col. ii. 8, 9, and iii. 12.

[4] 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

[5] *Ant.* x, 2. 2.

[6] Isa. xxvii. 1.

"And Hezekiah was glad of them": pleased to see them and flattered, for he felt that he was now becoming a power in the political world. Further, the object of their visit fell in with his secret wish and intention, viz. to cast off the yoke of Assyria. Therefore in his pride and satisfaction, as well as in his wish to form a strong alliance with Assyria's age-long foe, he set himself to work to lionise his visitors, that so they might carry home a glowing report to their master. He does not, however, appear to have committed himself to any formal pledge of alliance, which shows, as I have already said, that he had not yet broken away from Assyria.

"And Hezekiah . . . showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious oil, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not." "The house of his precious things," or "his treasure-house": the Hebrew term here used is borrowed from the Assyro-Babylonian. Ashurbanipal makes use of the same term when describing his spoiling of Susa (Shushan): "I opened their *treasure-houses*, wherein were heaped up silver, gold, goods, and possessions."[1] For the high value set on spices and the use made of them see Ex. xxv. 6, 1 Kings x. 2, 10, 25, 2 Chron. xvi. 14, Esth. ii. 12. "Precious oil" was much valued by the Assyrians. Sargon speaks of it as one of the costly gifts made to him at the feast held at the dedication of his famous palace at Dur Sharrukin.[2] From chap. xxii. 8, compared with 1 Kings x. 17, we are enabled to identify "the house of his armour" with "the house of the forest of Lebanon" built by Solomon. This was by far the largest of all Solomon's buildings, and would be likely to call forth the admiration of the ambassadors. It was a large hall, 150 cubits by 50, and 30 in height, *i.e.* 175 feet by 58, and 35 in height, reckoning 14 inches to the cubit.[3] The roof was supported on four rows of cedar pillars. This gave it a certain resemblance to the Lebanon forest with its massive trunks, which sufficiently accounts for its name. Hezekiah showed his visitors all that was worth seeing "in all his dominion," says the sacred writer, because, as Delitzsch observes, it was all concentrated in Jerusalem.

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[1] Rassam Cylinder, col. v. 132.

[2] Khorsabad Inscription, line 181.

[3] Nebuchadnezzar's throne-room at Babylon, which was probably vaulted, measured 170 feet by 55. Koldewey, pp. 103–104. For the cubit used in building see *Solomon's Temple*, p. 219, by W. S. Caldecott.

In the interview between Isaiah and Hezekiah after the ambassadors had departed it is impossible not to be struck with a certain severity in the tone and manner of the prophet. What had Hezekiah done which called for a rebuke, so severe, albeit unspoken? The answer is that he had been showing a spirit altogether unbefitting one who had so recently been brought up from the gates of the grave; one to whom a miraculous sign of his recovery had been granted by Jehovah, along with the promise, "I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city." Was it for such an one to be lifted up with a vain worldly spirit and to contemplate an alliance with Babylon, when he had again and again been assured that Jehovah Himself would defend Jerusalem, nay, would even come down to fight upon Mount Zion? Surely the right line of conduct for a really humble and trustful soul to pursue was to be found in the prophet's words, as given in chap. xiv. 32, "What, then, shall one answer the messengers of the nations? That Jehovah hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge."[1] Such an answer to these "strangers" from a "far country" would have given him the opportunity to tell of Jehovah's great Name, and of His mighty hand, and of His stretched out arm.[2] But alas! instead of exalting his God, Hezekiah sought only to exalt himself. As the Chronicler says, "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up."

To understand Isaiah's conduct, we have only to remember that he was an inspired prophet, the mouthpiece of his God, and sent by his God to convict his royal master. This fully explains the way in which he takes the king to task. "What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee?" he enquires, speaking as one who already suspected something wrong. In reply Hezekiah answers the second and easier question: "They are come from a far country[3] unto me," as if to say, "the least I could do was to show them all civility." The prophet's next remark seems to say, "You did more than that." His words are, "What have they seen in thine house?" The self-convicted king now sees that it is useless for him any longer to cloak his actions, and makes the frank confession, "All that is in mine house have they seen, there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them." Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of Jehovah of hosts, Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith Jehovah. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

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[1] Cheyne *in loco.*

[2] 1 Kings viii. 41, 42.

[3] Similarly Sargon speaks of the land of Judah as a "far-off region"; cf. Nimrûd Inscription, line 8.

The three prophecies of Isaiah respecting Babylon are not a little remarkable, when we review the probable time of their utterance, their purport, and the time of their fulfilment. The earliest of the three, given in chap. xiv. 23, appears to have been uttered a little before the death of Tiglathpileser, in 727 B.C. Isaiah there predicts that Babylon will be wiped out; that Jehovah will make it "a possession for the porcupine and pools of water," and that He will "sweep it with the besom of destruction." The latest, found in chap. xxi. 9, refers to the same dire destruction. A column of soldiers in double file are heard calling out in triumph, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground." These two prophecies were fulfilled to the letter in the terrible havoc and destruction wrought by Sennacherib in 689 B.C. Then between the two, a little before 711 B.C., comes the prophecy now before us, in which it is foretold that Babylon will take Judah captive.[1] Who but an inspired man would have ventured to utter prophecies seemingly so at variance? Only under a divine impulse must these prophecies have been spoken, so remarkable, so altogether unexpected, their contents and their fulfilment.

On the present occasion Isaiah predicts to Hezekiah the captivity of his children at Babylon: "Of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away." Are we to understand the words of Hezekiah's actual sons, or of his descendants? If we take the words in the first sense, then the prophecy must point to Manasseh, concerning whom the Chronicler writes: "Jehovah spake to Manasseh and his people: but they gave no heed. Wherefore Jehovah brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh in chains [Margin 'with hooks'], and carried him to Babylon." This passage, which much puzzled the earlier critics, has received some light from the inscriptions. Manasseh in his long reign of fifty-five years was a contemporary of the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. Now we infer from the Chronicler's record that he had been a vassal of the Assyrian king, had rebelled against him, and was then taken captive by his generals and brought before him at Babylon, whence, after being imprisoned for a time, he was released and sent back to his kingdom. These inferences are confirmed by the cuneiform inscriptions. Among the twenty-two kings of the Hittite-land (Syria) and beyond the sea (Cyprus), who at the command of Esarhaddon brought timber from Sirara (Hermon) and Lebanon for his palace at Nineveh, *ca.* 674, we find the name of *Menasê shar Ya-ū-di*, "Manasseh king of Judah." His name is repeated in a similar list of about the year 668. Manasseh, then, was an Assyrian vassal. When did he rebel against his suzerain? Some think in the reign of Esarhaddon, 681–668: but it is more probable that his rebellion took place in the middle of the reign of Ashurbanipal, 668–626, when that king's brother, seeking to make Babylon an independent kingdom, stirred up very widespread disaffection among the vassals of Assyria. "The kings of the West Country," writes Ashurbanipal, "and of the land of Melukhkha, all of them, he seduced to revolt from me." Among these kings must certainly be included Manasseh. But it is further added by the Chronicler that Manasseh was taken before the Assyrian king at *Babylon*. That Assyrian kings sometimes held their court at Babylon we know from the Annals of Sargon, who states that he received in that city an embassy from the seven kings of Cyprus.[1] But would Ashurbanipal, of the latter half of whose reign we have no record, be likely to go to Babylon after putting down with some severity the rebellion raised by his faithless brother? The Assyrian records enable us to answer that he probably did go thither. For shortly after putting down the rebellion he issued a friendly proclamation to the Babylonians, in which he calls them "men under my protection," and continues his address thus: "It is well with me, my palace, and my sons. May it be well with you and your sons!" He also ordered sacrifices to be offered in the temples, and encouraged the nobles of Babylon and Borsippa to send in their submission. Further, a letter is still extant which shows that the royal overtures were welcomed, and that a proposal was made for the Assyrian king to visit Babylon in person.[2]

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[1] Cf. Mic. iv. 10.

Manasseh was probably captured about 645 B.C., when Akku (Acre) and Ushû (mainland Tyre) were punished for their rebellion.[3] According to the Chronicler he was "taken with hooks," *i.e.* dragged along with a rope attached to a hook run through his jaws, "bound with fetters, and carried to Babylon";

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[1] See Chapter XVII, p. 192.

[2] Olmstead, pp. 476–477.

[3] Rassam Cylinder, col. ix. 117–128.

then, presently, upon his true repentance and earnest prayer, God "brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom." The record is no doubt perfectly true. Ashurbanipal tells us how about this time he spared the life of an Arabian king brought before him after the same fashion.[1] But what about his restoration to his kingdom? That would no doubt be an act of policy on the part of the Assyrian king, for Egypt was on the point of recovering her freedom, if she had not already done so, and it was desirable to attach Judah to the Assyrian interest lest she too should fall away. Finally, it may be presumed from the history of Manasseh's reign that his captivity and repentance took place toward the close of his life—which synchronises with the middle of the reign of Ashurbanipal—when it was beyond him, despite his earnest efforts, to undo the evil results of those long years when he had so diligently fostered idolatry of every kind.

There are, however, certain objections to our seeing a complete fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy in the story of Manasseh as told us by the Chronicler. Isaiah's words seem to have a wider range. In the first place they speak of "thy sons"; not of a single individual. Secondly, they appear to point to the action of a Babylonian monarch, rather than to that of an Assyrian king holding his court at Babylon. Lastly, they indicate a residence at Babylon of some duration rather than a brief captivity. On these grounds it is better to see their fulfilment in the story told us in the opening chapter of the Book of Daniel, where Nebuchadnezzar orders the "masters of his eunuchs" to "bring in certain of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal and of the nobles," and to train them up to be courtiers in his palace. We do not know that Manasseh was ever a courtier in the palace of Ashurbanipal at Babylon, and if we take the term "eunuch" in the sense of a servant of the king and employed by him as such, then it seems to be far more suitable to describe the position of Daniel and his three friends than that of the aged king of Judah. Lastly, the description in Isa. xxxix. 6 of the spoiling of the royal palace at Jerusalem received a complete fulfilment, not in the reign of Manasseh, but in the time of Nebuchadnezzar at the close of the reigns of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah: see 2 Kings xxiv. 13 and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 18.

It now only remains to notice the spirit in which Hezekiah received this momentous prediction. First, he received it as a message from God. The prophetic utterance commences thus: "Hear the word of Jehovah of hosts": and the king after listening to that utterance replies, "Good is the word of Jehovah which thou hast spoken." After which, according to 2 Kings xx. 19, he adds, "Is it not so, if peace and truth shall be in my days?" That is, he sees in this revelation of coming national downfall about to overtake his people for their sins a well-merited rebuke of his pride and self-congratulation, and acknowledges that God is dealing with him more mercifully than he deserves. If during his reign his country is to taste the blessings of peace, and the repeated promises of deliverance from the Assyrian peril are to be confirmed, then, is it not possible that even this threatening pronouncement may have its brighter side? If judgment is delayed for a time, may not mercy in the end rejoice against judgment if only the nation repents? Thus viewed, his spirit is seen to be, not merely a spirit of resignation, but a trustful, and even a hopeful spirit.

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[1] Rassam Cylinder, col. ix. 112–114.

CHAPTER XV

THE BURDEN OF THE WILDERNESS OF THE SEA

> "I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts."
> —ISA. xiv. 23.

THE Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea has long possessed a strong attraction for students of prophecy. The older commentators, who had not the advantage of the stores of historical information opened out to us by the reading of the cuneiform inscriptions, looked upon it as a prophecy of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. The Septuagint rendering of verse 2, "Against me are the Elamites, and the princes of the Persians are coming against me,"[1] which brought down the subject of the prophecy to events which were to happen in the Persian era, doubtless led the way to this interpretation: an interpretation, which held its own from the days of Jerome till about half a century ago. According to this view of the passage Media and Elam in verse 2 stood for the Medes and Persians, and the disturbed banquet in verse 5 was the counterpart of Belshazzar's feast and of that festive carousal of the Babylonians related in the pages of Xenophon. So admirably did all fit in that everybody was perfectly satisfied. To such an interpretation, however, there are some very strong objections. Assuming the prophecy to be the work of Isaiah, it is difficult, as the late Dr. Driver observes, to see what "intelligible purposes could be subserved by the prophet announcing to the generation of Hezekiah an occurrence lying in the distant future and having no bearing on contemporary interests"; while at the same time the traditional view altogether fails to account for the alarm and aversion with which the prophet contemplates the fall of the great oppressing city. To these considerations it must be added that there is no evidence that when Cyrus entered Babylon he treated the images of the gods in the way described in verse 9. On the contrary, we are expressly assured that his entrance, save for the attack on the palace in which Belshazzar was slain, was a peaceful one, and that there was no cessation whatever of the temple worship.[1]

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[1] *'Επ' ἐμοὶ οἱ 'Ελαμῖται, κοὶ οἱ πρέσβεις τῶν Περσῶν ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἔρχονται.*

The first person to suggest a more satisfactory explanation of the passage was that gifted Assyriologist, the late Mr. George Smith, of the British Museum. Comparing Isaiah chapters xx. and xxi. with the Annals of Sargon, Mr. Smith suggested that while chapter xx. refers to Sargon's capture of Ashdod in 711 B.C., chapter xxi. in its opening vision refers to that same king's campaign against Merodachbaladan king of Babylon in the two following years.[2] According to this new view, which was worked out in some detail by Kleinert,[3] the subject of this prophecy belongs to the Isaianic age, and the siege of Babylon here foretold was carried out by Sargon. But this interesting solution of the problem had scarcely begun to find acceptance when a fresh difficulty began to show itself. The entrance of Sargon into Babylon at the close of the year 710 was shown to have been even more peaceful than that of Cyrus 170 years later. The Babylonians, tired of the rule of Merodachbaladan, sent out a deputation to meet the conqueror and to welcome him into their town as a deliverer; whilst, instead of any sacrilegious treatment of the Babylonian gods, Sargon seems to have outdone all his royal predecessors in the costly offerings he made at their shrines or in their behalf.[4] If verse 9 was not fulfilled by Cyrus, still less was it by Sargon.

For the historic fulfilment of this Burden, and of the two short Burdens which follow it, we must turn to the records of Sennacherib and to the events which took place in Babylonia and the desert to the west of it during the years 691–689 B.C. As we shall presently see, it was Sennacherib, *not* Cyrus, and *not* Sargon, who in 689 smashed the idol-gods of Babylon, and, strange to say, gloried in an act which to others must have appeared most sacrilegious: Sennacherib, too, who in the previous year invaded Arabia and captured Dumah; so that the three Burdens of Isa. xxi. which appear to have been uttered shortly before the events foretold in them took place,[5] were fulfilled about the same time and are rightly put side by side in the Book of Isaiah.

The prophet entitles his utterance: "The Burden of the

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[1] See the Annalistic Tablet of Cyrus, rev. col. i, lines 15–20.

[2] *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, vol. ii, pp. 328–329.

[3] *Theologischen Studien und Kritiken* for 1877.

[4] According to the Khorsabad Inscription, Sargon gave to the gods and for public works at Babylon the tribute due to him for three successive years.

[5] See verse 16.

Wilderness of the Sea," in allusion no doubt to the closing verse of his earlier prediction—uttered in the days of Tiglathpileser some forty years ago—which stands at the head of this chapter. That prediction had long since been fulfilled in the cutting off of Tiglathpileser and his dynasty, but its closing verse still remained unfulfilled. The title, then, of this later prediction may be taken as an indication that the fulfilment of that closing verse is now near at hand. Babylon is about to become a "wilderness of the sea." She will no longer be regarded as sacred and inviolate. The very images of her gods will not merely be carried away by the conqueror to be placed in the temple of his god, but will be seized and dashed to the ground on the spot.[1] Further, an unmistakable sign is given in the course of the prophecy to indicate the hostile power that will commit this daring act of sacrilege.

It must be understood, then, that when Isaiah uttered his earlier prediction such a thing as a devastation of Babylon by the Assyrians was altogether most unlikely. Tukulti-Urta I,[2] one of the early Assyrian kings, had thus treated the sacred mother-city some five and a half centuries previously, and Tiglathpileser I about a century and a half later had burned her palaces, but now for a long period Assyrian kings in their southern campaigns had treated her with marked respect. When Shalmaneser III was in Babylon in 835 B.C., "he filled the city with his gifts." [3] Tiglathpileser III had lately shown the same respectful behaviour. His first campaign was directed *towards* Babylon, but not *against* her,[4] and he was careful on that occasion to offer sacrifices to the Babylonian gods in one of their cities. Then in his later years, as we have seen, he sat on the throne of Babylon as one who had taken the hands of Bel and become her legitimate ruler. The overflowing generosity of Sargon has already been touched upon. What, then, was it that led his son Sennacherib only twenty years later to destroy in so ruthless a fashion the city which his father had so honoured? In the main the passions of disappointment, revenge, and despair. Babylon was a problem which Sennacherib was never able to solve. On the death of Sargon it at once broke out into revolt, and Merodachbaladan was again able for a short time to maintain his seat on the throne. In his first campaign Sennacherib defeated his rival and put him to flight. He then placed one of his courtiers, Bel-ibni, on the vacant throne. But Bel-ibni proved a failure, so three years later he carried him back to Assyria and placed his own eldest son, Ashur-nadin-shum, on the throne. In the sixth year of Ashur-nadin-shum, while Sennacherib, as mentioned in the last chapter, was engaged in pursuing the fugitive subjects of Merodachbaladan across the Gulf to Elam, the Elamite king made a descent on Babylon and carried off Ashur-nadin-shum to Elam. In doing this he was, no doubt, seconded by the Babylonians, for before leaving Babylon he placed on the throne a native Babylonian, Nergal-ushezib. In the following year Nergal-ushezib was betrayed and fell into the hands of the Assyrian king, who exposed him in the great gate of Nineveh. But this did not stamp out the spirit of rebellion at Babylon. "The people of Babylon," writes Sennacherib, "evil devils, had closed their city gates, their hearts planning resistance. Shuzub the Chaldean, a weakling hero, who had no knees, a vassal, subject to the governor of the city of Lakhiru—around him gathered the fugitive Arameans, the runaway, the murderer, the robber." This Chaldean Shuzub, as Sennacherib goes on to relate, pressed by him, fled to Elam, and returning thence entered Babylon and was placed by the Babylonians on the throne. The whole passage shows both the rebellious disposition of the Babylonians and the bitter animus of the Assyrian king. Perhaps we can hardly wonder at this latter when we think of the fate that had probably overtaken his eldest son in Elam and of the way in which his efforts to bring Babylon under the sway of Assyria had again and again been frustrated.

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[1] Contrast Isa. xxi. 9 with xlvi. 1.

[2] Formerly read as Tukulti-Adar, or Tukulti-Ninip.

[3] Olmstead, p. 122.

[4] See Chapter VII, pp. 71, 72.

In the autumn of 693 B.C. Sennacherib, doubtless as an act of retaliation, marched against Elam, and was able to retake from the Elamites numerous cities which had formerly belonged to Assyria. His intention was to penetrate to Madaktu, the royal city; but the lateness of the season and the severity of the weather prevented him from accomplishing his purpose, and compelled him to return to Nineveh. The next year appears to have been spent in preparing for his campaign against Babylon, and in the following year he took the field and marched thitherward. But the Babylonians in the meanwhile had not been idle. By the proffer of a large bribe taken from the treasury of the god Bel they had secured the powerful help of the king of Elam, so that when the Assyrian king reached Khalulē on the bank of the Tigris he found himself confronted by a host "like a great swarm of locusts." A great battle was fought, and Sennacherib, according to his own account, performed prodigies of valour. Nevertheless he was unable to advance any further: indeed, according to the Babylonian Chronicle, Khalulē was not a victory for the Assyrians but a defeat. Perhaps the truth lies between the two accounts. Determined not to be baffled, Sennacherib spent the next year in further preparations. In 689 he again took the field. In his inscription, written on the rocks at Bavian,[1] Sennacherib gives us an account of this second expedition, which furnishes a very valuable confirmation of the exact fulfilment of the Isaianic predictions contained in chaps. xiii. 19, xiv. 23, and xxi. 9. "In my second campaign," writes the conqueror, "I advanced swiftly against Babylon, upon whose conquest I had determined. Like the oncoming of a storm I broke loose, and I overwhelmed it like a hurricane. I completely invested the city. With mines and engines my hands captured it. The plunder . . . his powerful . . . whether small or great, I left none. With their corpses I filled the broad places of the city. Shuzub king of Babylon, together with his family and his nobles, I carried off alive into my land. The wealth of that city—silver, gold, precious stones, property, and goods—I delivered into the hands of my people and they made it their own. The gods dwelling therein—the hands of my people took them and they shivered them. Their property and goods they seized. Adad and Shala, the gods of Ekallâti,[2] whom Marduk-nadin-akhe king of Akkad,[3] in the time of Tiglathpileser [4] king of Assyria, had seized and carried off to Babylon, after four hundred and eighteen years I brought them out of Babylon and returned them to their places in Ekallati. The city and houses, foundation and walls, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. The wall and rampart, temples and gods, temple-tower of brick and earth, all of it, I razed and dumped into the Arakhtu.[5] Through the midst of that city I dug canals, I flooded its site with water, and I destroyed the structure of its foundations. I laid bare its foundation more completely than would be done by a flood. That in days to come the site of that city, [its] temples and gods, might not be remembered, I completely blotted it out with waters and made it like a fen."

We are now in a position to study the Isaianic Burden, and to note as we go along the close correspondence between the prophecy and its fulfilment. The opening verses of this remarkable utterance realise to the full Ewald's enthusiastic description: "the language is borne aloft on the wings of very recent agitation, high inspiration, and beautiful animation." The passage may be rendered thus:

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[1] In a wild and very beautiful nook in the mountains N.E. of Khorsabad.

[2] "The Palaces," the name of a town a few miles south of the city of Ashur.

[3] Northern Babylonia.

[4] Tiglathpileser I, 1115–1103 B.C.

[5] Apparently the name of the river-front at Babylon: see King's *Babylon*, p. 36.

"As whirlwinds sweeping on in the South,
It cometh from the wilderness, from a land of terror.
A grievous vision is shewed unto me:
The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the devastator devastateth.
—Go up, O Elam! Besiege, O Media!
All the sighing that he[1] causeth have I made to cease[2]—
Therefore are my loins filled with pain;
Pangs have taken hold upon me like the pangs of one in travail:
I am so tortured that I cannot hear; so terrified that I cannot see.
My heart fluttereth; horror hath affrighted me:
The twilight that I love is turned into trembling unto me."

It is the calm still evening: not a breath is stirring. Isaiah loves the evening twilight. It favours intercourse with heaven: it is his special time for communion with his God. Like Isaac of old, he delights to meditate at eventide.[3] But this particular evening is to become to him a time of horror and dismay. For like the hot, fierce blast of the Sirocco in the Negeb, or South Country of Judah, whirling clouds of dust and sand through the air, there sweeps up from the Wilderness of the Sea, from a "terrible land"—*i.e.* a land where terrible deeds are being done—horror: at first dim, vague, and indistinguishable, but quickly unfolding itself as it draws rapidly nearer. "As whirlwinds sweeping on in the South IT COMETH." And before we have time to ask what this dreadful appearance is, the "grievous vision," which the prophet likens to the advance of a hurricane, has made itself plain. It is the storm-cloud of war: that same hurricane which swept over Belgium in the August of 1914. The prophet sees an invading army, hurrying onwards like the whirlwind, and like the whirlwind leaving ruin and desolation in its track. How closely does Isaiah's vision correspond with Sennacherib's description of his rapid advance: "I advanced quickly against Babylon. Like the oncoming of a storm I broke loose, and I overwhelmed it like a hurricane"! The prophet's vision was indeed a "grievous vision," a vision of wholesale carnage and destruction, if we interpret it by the account of what was most certainly its fulfilment. For Assyria's rushing whirlwind is seen to spend its destructive force over Babylon. Her walls and temples are thrown to the ground, all her valuables are seized, her squares are filled with the corpses of her inhabitants, and every pains is taken to efface her very site. How telling, how exact, the fulfilment of the words contained in Isaiah's earlier prophecy: "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah"! Further, the conqueror lays very strong emphasis on the agency employed to complete the ruin. "Through the midst of that city I dug canals, I flooded its site with water. . . I completely blotted it out with waters and made it like a fen." How exactly does Babylon now answer to the name bestowed on her by the prophet, "The Wilderness of the Sea": how completely do Sennacherib's words describe the fulfilment of the Divine threat, "I will also make it a possession for the porcupine and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith Jehovah of hosts"!

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[1] The suffix is feminine in the original, the reference being to Assyria.

[2] These two lines form a remarkable parenthesis.

[3] Gen. xxiv. 63.

The vision presented to the prophet's inner sight was most truly a "grievous vision" in itself. But what makes it still more grievous to him is the fact that he knows and realises who the destroyer is. "The treacherous dealer" and "the devastator" are but other names for the Assyrian, if, indeed, they do not point definitely to Sennacherib himself: see chap. xxxiii. 1. It was Sennacherib who dealt treacherously with Judah in the matter of the tribute paid by Hezekiah, and it is not unlikely that treachery played some part in his capture of Babylon. Only some four years before he tells how he defeated Shuzub of Babylon (Nergal-ushezib) in open battle, adding, "I took him alive with my own hand." But a letter still extant reveals the fact that Shuzub was betrayed into his hands, and that the traitor was then laid upon the balance and the other pan weighted with the silver which was to reward his treachery.[1] "Devastator," rather than "spoiler," is a better translation of the second epithet bestowed on the Assyrian, for the word used in the original carries with it the notion of violence, which suits Sennacherib's description of the treatment meted out to Babylon. In Assyrian conquest spoliation followed as a matter of course, but such ruthless treatment as Babylon experienced was wellnigh phenomenal.

In his recital of the Babylonian campaign Sennacherib lays an emphasis on his *swift* advance: "In my second campaign I advanced swiftly against Babylon." The words suggest that he sought to take the Babylonians by surprise. Just such a surprise is foretold in the Isaianic Burden by the six short clauses so dramatically grouped together in verse 5:

> "They prepare the table, they spread the coverlet, they eat, they drink:
> Rise up, ye princes! Anoint the shield!"

It is the time of the evening meal, and all is going on as usual in the palace. The board has been prepared, the couches spread, and the princes and nobles are reclining at table, when of a sudden in the midst of the banquet the call is given "To arms!" Such a summons is startling. No preparation has been made for any immediate attack, for no such attack was expected. The leathern shields have not even been anointed, as was always done before going into battle in order that the missiles of the enemy might glide off them. Thus, in this particular case also, prophecy and history are in close agreement.

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[1] Olmstead, p. 292.

The latter half of the Burden, verses 6 to 10, is scarcely less remarkable than the earlier, of which it may be regarded as an explanation. We learn from it the name of the city that is threatened. "The Wilderness of the Sea" is seen to be a prophetic designation of Babylon, and the enemy that is rushing upon her with the speed and force of the whirlwind is, as we shall see, marked out by an unmistakable sign.

These verses may be rendered as follows:

"For thus hath the Lord said unto me,
Go station the watchman; let him declare what he seeth:
And should he see a troop, horsemen in pairs,
A troop of asses, a troop of camels,
Let him hearken attentively, aye, very attentively.
And he (viz. the watchman) cried as a lion,
On the watch-tower, my lord, I am standing continually by day,
And in my ward I am set every night—
And behold! (just as he was speaking) there came a troop of men, horsemen in pairs;
And it (viz. the troop) answered and said: Fallen! Fallen is Babylon!
And all the graven images of her gods are shivered to the ground!"

In the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel,[1] the prophets are compared to watchmen, who from some point of vantage see things in the distance and give warning of their approach. The nearest parallel to the present passage is found in Hab. ii. 1, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will look to see what he will speak with me." But what makes the present passage unique is, that the prophet is bidden to divide himself into two persons. He is to station his prophetic spirit on the watch-tower, and his spirit is to report to him what it sees. Further, he is told beforehand the sight for which his spirit is to be on the look-out, viz. a cavalcade of horsemen riding in double file, followed by a troop of asses and camels, the baggage-train of an army laden with spoil.[2] When this procession comes across the field of view, he is to hearken diligently, for he will hear momentous tidings. In a spirit of thrilling expectation the prophet sets his watch. Day after day, night after night, he watches ceaselessly. At last he can bear the suspense no longer and is breaking out into a loud cry of impatience, when lo! across the scene comes the promised spectacle, a cavalcade of warriors in double file, and from their lips is heard to go up a cry of triumph, "Fallen! fallen is Babylon! and all the graven images of her gods are shivered to the ground!"

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[1] Isa. xxi. 6, lii. 8, lvi. 10; Jer. vi. 17; Ezek. iii. 17, xxxiii. 2, 6, 7; also Hos. ix. 8; Micah vii. 4.

[2] Isa. xxx. 6.

The warlike train which the prophet sees is evidently returning victorious from the sack of Babylon, and the question as to what nationality it represents is solved by the twice-repeated words, "horsemen in pairs." In any scenic representation of an Assyrian army horsemen would form one of the most striking features. Ezekiel pictures the Assyrian officers as "warlike governors and commanders, clothed in coats of mail, cavalry-men, horse-riders, all of them charming young men."[1] But that which most clearly marks the force seen by the prophet as an Assyrian one is the significant addition "*in pairs*." The bas-reliefs from Kouyunjik, Nimrûd, and other ancient sites, reveal to us the fact that the Assyrians had a great fondness for fighting in pairs. Everything, it would seem, must be done in couples, in order that the soldier might be cheered and encouraged by the presence of a comrade at his side. Thus in the well-known bas-relief, representing the siege of a city by Ashurnatsirpal,[2] all the Assyrian warriors are seen to be thus grouped: while the Gates of Balâwât, which give us so vivid an idea of the conduct of Assyrian campaigns, offer many illustrations of the spectacle for which the prophet was to look: "horsemen in pairs." Isaiah, then, sees an *Assyrian* army returning victorious from the sack of Babylon, and their cry of triumph, "Fallen! fallen is Babylon! and all the graven images of her gods are shivered to the ground!" is seen to be in exact accordance with Sennacherib's recital: "the gods dwelling therein, the hands of my people took and they shivered[3] them." In other instances the images of the gods are described as being cast into the fire,[4] or else carried into captivity:[5] here, they are treated with a special and marked contumely, for this very reason, that the Chaldeans are known to be mad upon their gods.

Very manifest throughout this Burden is the prophet's deep

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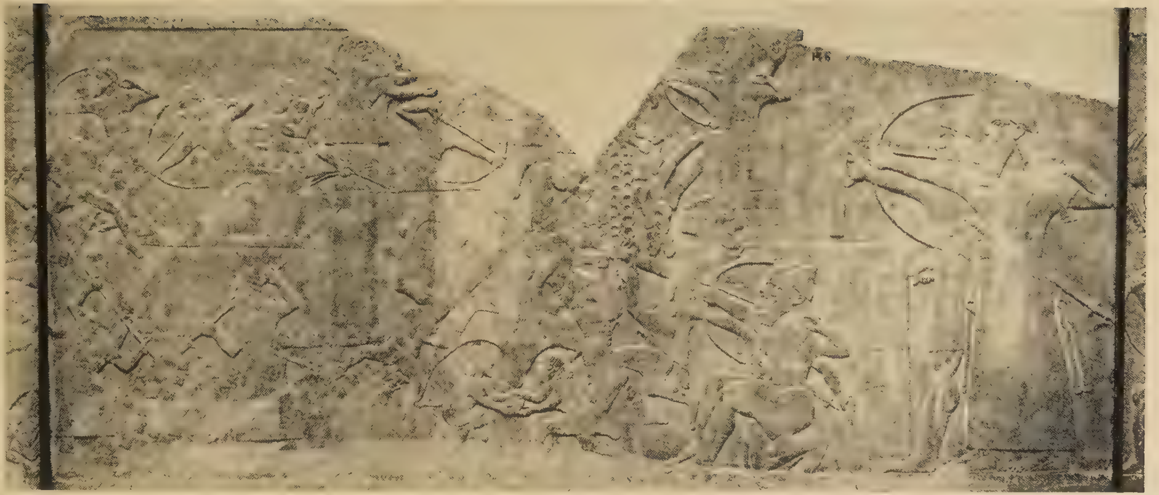
[1] Ezek. xxiii. 12, Ewald's translation.

[2] British Museum, Nimrûd Gallery, Nos. 13–15.

[3] Sennacherib uses the same verb in Assyrian that Isaiah uses in the Hebrew.

[4] Isa. xxxvii. 19.

[5] Isa. xlvi. 1, 2.



SIEGE OF A CITY BY ASHURNATSIRPAL.

facing p. 156.

depression. What he sees is to him a "grievous vision": it has turned his still, quiet evening into a time of terror. He describes the sharp anguish of mind through which his spirit is passing in terms borrowed from physical suffering, from the pangs of childbirth. He tells his hearers that what he sees and hears in his vision is more than he can bear: "I am so tortured that I cannot hear, so terrified that I cannot speak." This is the same gentle, loving spirit, that in chap. xxii. 4 cries out, "Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me, for the spoiling of the daughter of my people." But can Isaiah feel thus for heathen nations? Oh yes! Compare chap. xv. 5: "My heart crieth out for Moab"; also xvi. 3–5 (R.V.M.), where he seconds the appeal of the fugitive Moabites to Zion, *i.e.* to the Davidic king, for shelter from the ruthless spoiler, by declaring that "a throne shall be established in mercy, and one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David; judging, and seeking judgment, and swift to do righteousness."[1] From this loving nature proceeds the inimitable strain of tenderness which characterises the closing verse of this Burden:

"O my trodden one, child of my threshing-floor,
That which I have heard from Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel,
I have declared unto you."

If the prophet can feel for others, how much more for his own people! His grief, his anguish here is for them. How sorely have they suffered only some ten years ago at the hands of the "treacherous dealer," the "devastator"! Their land, so dear to the prophet, was then made a veritable threshing-floor: "my threshing-floor" he lovingly calls it, because their sufferings were his. The events of those dark days have all been brought back to his mind by this sight of the terrible doom in store for Babylon. But why does he add the words "that which I have heard from Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, I have declared unto you"? Because he has just predicted two seemingly very unlikely things: first, the utter destruction of Babylon by the Assyrians; secondly, the putting down of Assyria by Elam and Media at a summons from the Supreme Power. These two great events—one to happen in the near future, the other after the lapse of wellnigh eighty years—are not his own imagination: they are no mere hallucination, but what he has heard from Jehovah of hosts, who is the God of Israel, and is watching over His Israel with unabated care. As the revelation comes from Jehovah, so Jehovah intends that

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[1] Cf. also Isa. xvi. 9.

His prophet should make it known to His people in order that they may see that they are not forgotten of Him.

As to the second of the above two events, the manner of its introduction into the prophecy is most remarkable. While the prophet is forced to see and hear the dreadful doings of the Assyrian —sights and sounds that are almost too much for him—his wail of sorrow is checked for the moment by a strange, mysterious voice, calling out as it were from the clouds :

> "Go up, O Elam ![1] Besiege, O Media !
> All the sighing that he causeth have I made to cease."

These words, it will be noticed, form a parenthesis in the prophetic utterance, for immediately after them Isaiah resumes his strain of lamentation, even though it has been interrupted by this voice from the skies : a thing, perhaps, not to be wondered at, seeing that the vision of devastation and destruction is still present to his view after the voice has ceased. With regard, then, to this mysterious communication, we are quite sure that the Speaker can be none other than He at whose bidding—to quote the words of a later prophecy—" sorrow and sighing shall flee away."[2] Elam and Media are here summoned by the Almighty to " go up " to battle, not against Babylon, as the older commentators supposed, but against Assyria, " the treacherous dealer " and " the devastator," who is the real cause of all the sighing, and by whose suppression Jehovah will make it to cease. That the summons to put down Assyria should be issued to these two nations would not seem anything remarkable to the prophet Isaiah, for the very reason that during his ministry they had both occupied a prominent place in Assyrian politics and had suffered much at her hands.

The idea of the older commentators that Elam here stands for Persia is an anachronism, since the first beginnings of the Persian power under Achaemenes did not make their appearance till half a century later, while yet another century was to elapse before that power grew into an empire under Cyrus. The Elam of the prophet's Burden is the power which in 721 B.C. met and stopped the troops of Sargon, thereby securing the throne of Babylon to Merodachbaladan for the next twelve years. Against this Elam somewhat later Sennacherib devoted five out of the eight campaigns recorded on the Taylor Cylinder. This was the nation ✓

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[1] The assonance of the original, *'ali 'Elam*, may be correctly rendered " Up ! Upland," since the name Elam means " Highland," in allusion to the mountainous aspect of the country as viewed from the plains below.

[2] Isa. xxxv. 10.

that suffered such heavy chastisement at the hands of Ashurbanipal in 660 B.C. and again about 645, as recorded at length in the inscription on the Rassam Cylinder. So terrible was the vengeance then poured out on that unhappy people that many historians have imagined that Elam was then wiped out. But Elam, as her story shows, possessed a wonderful power of recuperation, and such scraps of her history as still survive go to prove that she outlived Assyria. Nineveh fell in 612 B.C., yet Elam, according to the Book of Jeremiah, survived in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, 604 B.C.,[1] and is mentioned as being still a powerful nation in a prophecy dating from the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, 597 B.C.[2] When, however, we come to the close of the twelfth year of Jehoiachin's captivity, 586 B.C., we learn from the Book of Ezekiel[3] that Ashur, Elam, Meshech and Tubal, Edom, and the Zidonians, have all gone down to Sheol, and as the order of the names is not geographical we may presume it to be chronological, and thus another evidence is afforded that Elam outlived Assyria. Now if this be so, then the strong presumption is, that Elam, having suffered so severely at the hands of Assyria only a generation before, would not be behindhand in doing her part to bring about the downfall of that oppressing power; and this, as we shall presently see, appears to have been the case.

As regards Media, attention has already been drawn to the invasions of that country by Tiglathpileser, the destruction and devastation that followed, and the large number of captives carried away.[4] Somewhat later, in 715 B.C., Sargon carried away 42,000 people from Andia, a district of Media to the N.E. of lake Urumiyah. This same year we read of fortresses being built in the neighbourhood of Kar-Sharrukin—a strong city, previously known as Kharkhar, on the eastern border of Assyria and in the same latitude as Ashur—with a view to the conquest of the Medes. Mention is also made of the annexation of thirty-four districts of Media. In the following year, when marching along the Median border, Sargon received tribute from a long list of Median chieftains whose names prove their Iranian origin. The Annals for this year open with the words: "In my 8th year to Man[5] and Media I went." In 713 the record in the Annals begins thus: "In my 9th year to the countries of Ellip, Bit-Daiukki, and Karalla I went." Bit-Daiukki no doubt represents the kingdom of Deioces, who according to Herodotus founded the Median monarchy.[6]

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[1] Jer. xxv. 25.

[2] Jer. xlix. 34–39.

[3] Ezek. xxxii. 22–30: for the date of this prophecy see verses 1 and 17.

[4] See Chapter IX, p. 87.

[5] The Minni of Jer. li. 27.

[6] Hdt. i. 96–101.

Then, further on, we read of the conquest of "Ba'itili, a district of Media on the border of Ellip," and of the subjugation of sundry "distant regions on the confines of the Arabs of the East and of the country of Nagira, belonging to the mighty Mandā who cast away the yoke of Ashur," where the parallel passage in the Khorsabad Inscription shows that the Mandā, or "nomads," is here a name for the Medes.[1] On the towns of these remote districts Sargon declares that he sent a storm-wind and turned the whole country to ruinous heaps. A little later he speaks of tribute paid by "forty-five town-governors of the mighty Medes."[2] But when we come to the reign of Sennacherib (705–681 B.C.) such references cease, and an ominous silence prevails respecting the Medes. Once only are they mentioned on the Taylor Cylinder, viz. at the close of Sennacherib's second campaign, and then, only after a vague, indefinite manner. They send him a "heavy tribute" and he "places them under his yoke," [3] viz. by merely receiving their tribute, for we do not read that he ever advanced a step into their country. It appears, then, that this cautious monarch deemed it best to leave the Medes alone. He no doubt knew of the political change that was going on among them, and how Deioces in the course of his long reign [4] was forming them into a nation, and judged it best to be on peaceful terms with such powerful neighbours.

With the above facts before us it is clear that both Elam and Media must have occupied quite recently a very prominent place in Assyrian politics, and when we consider the relation in which they stood to that great military power it cannot seem strange to us, any more than to the prophet Isaiah, that these two nations should be summoned by the Almighty to put down the tyrant. It now only remains to show how this summons was obeyed.

Our most enlightening contemporary record with regard to the fall of Assyria is undoubtedly the cuneiform tablet known as B.M. No. 21,901, which may best be described as an extract from the Babylonian Chronicle embracing the years 616–609 B.C.[5] This tablet, evidently written in Babylonia, views all from the Babylonian point of view, and is chiefly concerned with the doings of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, who is styled throughout "the king of Akkad," *i.e.* Northern Babylonia. We learn from it some remarkable facts: first, that in the last days of Assyria Egypt and Minni[1] came to her help: then, that Nineveh fell as early as 612 B.C., but that after her fall the Assyrians made a last stand at Haran, from which place they were driven in 610, just eighty years after the probable date of Isaiah's Burden. But what most concerns us is the question as to what nations joined to put down Assyria. The leading part in the final struggle, as witnessed by the tablet no less than by the Medo-Persian tradition in Herodotus, was no doubt taken by Cyaxares king of the Medes. In 614 Cyaxares made an ineffectual attempt to take Nineveh; but shortly after, marching down the Tigris, he captured Ashur. Nabopolassar of Babylon was not in time, so we are told, to join in the assault on Ashur, but over the ruins of that town he entered into an alliance with Cyaxares. In the following year the Babylonian king was very active on the Middle Euphrates. Then in 612, uniting his forces with those of the Median king, they marched up the Tigris to attack Assyria. Three battles were fought with the Assyrians in the summer of this year; after which Nineveh was successfully stormed, a great slaughter made of the chief men, a heavy spoil carried away, and the city left in ruins. We are also informed that Sin-shar-ishkun was king at the time of its fall. Unhappily that portion of the record which deals with the capture of the great city is partially obliterated. Nabopolassar appears to have been present on the occasion, but does not seem to have taken any prominent part in the final assault. Despite the Babylonian colouring of the narrative the Median king is evidently the leading spirit in the war. But, it will be asked, how is it that we find no mention of any part being taken by the Elamites? Probably because the writer's chief concern is with the doings of the Babylonian monarch. To find what part the Elamites took in putting down Assyria we must look elsewhere, viz. to an extract from Abydenus—a disciple of the Chaldean historian Berosus—which has been preserved for us in the pages of Eusebius. Abydenus mentions Saracus, *i.e.* Sin-shar-ishkun, as king at the time of the fall of Nineveh. He also faithfully records the following facts: viz. Sennacherib's subjugation of Babylon, and his campaign against Cilicia; the conquest of Egypt by Esarhaddon, and his being succeeded on the throne of Assyria by Sardanapalus, *i.e.* Ashurbanipal. There is also a misty reference to the murder of Sennacherib by his son Adramelus, the Scripture Adrammelech. We may, therefore, place some credit in this

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[1] Khorsabad Inscription, line 69.

[2] Annals, lines 166–167.

[3] Taylor Cylinder, col. ii. 29–33.

[4] Hdt. i. 102.

[5] See *The Fall of Nineveh*, by Mr. C. J. Gadd of the British Museum, London, 1923, where the tablet and its contents are very ably discussed.

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[1] The kingdom of Minni, or Man, lay to the S. of Lake Urumiyah. The Mannai, who wavered in their allegiance between Assyria and Ararat, are found in the days of Esarhaddon leagued with the Medes and Cimmerians against Assyria.

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historian's account of the fall of Assyria, which runs thus: "After him (viz. Sardanapalus) Saracus reigned over the Assyrians. And when he was informed that a very great multitude of barbarians had come against him from the sea,[1] he sent Busalossarus (Nabopolassar) as his general in haste to Babylon. But he, having with a treasonable design obtained Amuheam (Amytis) the daughter of Astyages, the prince of the Medes, to be affianced to his son Nabuchodrossarus (Nebuchadnezzar), marched straightway to surprise the city of Ninus (Nineveh). But when Saracus the king was apprised of all these proceedings, he burnt his royal palace, and Nabuchodrossarus succeeded to the empire."[2]

In the above account in the multitude of barbarians coming from the sea—literally "out of the sea"—it is impossible not to recognise the Elamites, for we can hardly picture any other people so doing. But it will perhaps be said: If Egypt and Minni changed sides and in her last extremity came to the help of Assyria, may not Elam have done the same? Hardly so, for her wrongs were more recent, and the wounds inflicted on her went far deeper. Almost at the close of continuous Assyrian history comes the black record of the woes inflicted on Elam by Ashurbanipal: a spectacle over which the ruthless tyrant gloats, as he strives to picture to posterity palaces and temples destroyed, the images of the gods, either, as in the case of Babylon, broken to shivers, or carried away, the sacred groves cut down, the statues of thirty-two kings carried off to Assyria, the royal tombs violated and the bones of their occupants taken away. To him the devastation of the country for the distance of twenty-five days' march, and the banishing from a wide tract "the voices of men, the tread of sheep and oxen, and the sound of sweet music," and the leaving the district to wild asses, gazelles, and beasts of the field, is all cause for so much boasting, something to be proud of.[3] After such treatment as this, could Elam ever have taken the side of Assyria? Must she not have burned to avenge her wrongs on that persecuting power? What wonder, then, that in the revolt of Babylonia against her overlord Elam should be the prime mover? Surely that vast host, many as the locusts, coming up from the sea, were the Elamites, who had crossed the head of the Persian Gulf to attack Assyria, just as Sennacherib nearly a century before had crossed it in the opposite direction to attack Elam. No doubt their object in choosing this route was to join hands with their old allies the Chaldeans under Nabopolassar. Their numbers must have done much to embolden the Babylonian king in his attack on Assyria. That they are not mentioned on the tablet is no wonder, since the object of the writer is to exalt the doings of "the king of Akkad," and to him the Elamites would only appear as a contingent of the Babylonian army. Then, further, as regards Nabopolassar himself, whom Abydenus calls a general of Saracus, but who is described on the tablet as "the king of Akkad," the two statements are reconciled if we regard him as a sub-king holding the same position at Babylon as was formerly held by Ashurbanipal's rebellious brother, Shamash-shum-ukin. Though not actually sent to Babylon, Nabopolassar may yet have received orders to march from Babylon against the Elamite host, and, being himself an hereditary foe of Assyria, it is not to be wondered at that under the circumstances he should have disobeyed those orders.

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[1] "Multitudinem barbarorum maximam e mari exisse." According to another version "Exercitus locustarum instar e mari exiens."

[2] Cory's *Fragments*.

[3] Rassam Cylinder, col. v. 63–vi. 106.

But it will be asked, doubtless, Why is not Babylon included along with Elam and Media in the summons to put down Assyria? To this question three answers can be given. In the first place, this prophecy reveals the destruction of Babylon accomplished by Sennacherib, but does not reveal her resurrection under Esarhaddon. Had Babylon, then, been included, the prophecy would have been confusing in the extreme. Secondly, according to Abydenus, the Elamites, and not Babylon, initiated the attack on Assyria. The part taken by Babylon, despite the chronicler's record of the brave doings of "the king of Akkad," is seen to be only a secondary part. But lastly—and this probably is the truest answer—Babylon was the successor of Assyria: in the closing words of the above extract from Abydenus, "*Nabuchodrossarus succeeded to the empire*." Compare the words of Herodotus when speaking of Babylon at this crisis: "whither after the fall of Nineveh the government had been removed." [1] That this was recognised at the time by the parties most interested, may be gathered from the way in which Nabonidus king of Babylon speaks of Ashurbanipal king of Assyria as "my predecessor." [2] Now if this fact was so generally recognised by the peoples of Western Asia, the reality of it was experienced by none more than by the Jews. In the words of Jeremiah, "Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, hath broken his bones." [3] So far, then, from putting down Assyria, Babylon perpetuated that power under a somewhat different form.

[1] Hdt. i. 178.

[2] Great Cylinder from Abu Habba, col. i. 47, 48.

[3] Jer. l. 17.

Before concluding an already over-long chapter, I must ask my readers' forbearance if I venture to add a few remarks as to the authorship of this astonishing Burden. Within the compass of these ten verses we meet with not a few indications that it comes from the pen of Isaiah. These are looked upon by Cheyne as an " Isaianic colouring," due to " the imitative skill of a later writer." But surely it is a simpler and truer view to regard these supposed imitations as signs of actual authorship. For a prophet of such originality, who could compare the coming of a " grievous vision " to the Sirocco sweeping across the Negeb of Judah ; who could imagine his own personality divided ; had no need to imitate, and would hardly be likely to do so. I regard, therefore, this " Isaianic colouring " as so many touches which betray the master hand ; and certainly for so short a passage they are fairly numerous. Thus the figure of the whirlwind, so strikingly employed in verse 1, appears no less than four times in the earlier part of this Book.[1] Further, to describe the advance of this Assyrian whirlwind the prophet uses the same Hebrew verb *khalaph* which in chap. viii. 8 he uses to describe the advance of the Assyrian deluge. In verse 2 the word for " vision " is found again in xxviii. 18 and xxix. 11, but nowhere else except in the Book of Daniel. The description of the Assyrian in the same verse is identical with that in xxxiii. 1 ; while the phraseology may be compared with xxiv. 16, " the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously " ; also the tone and sentiment of the last clause appear again in xxv. 8 and xxxv. 10. In verse 3 the same simile is employed as in xiii. 8. In verse 4 the word translated " panteth," literally " wandereth," is a favourite word with Isaiah, being found no less than eleven times in the earlier part of this Book. The unusual sense of " troop," attached to the Hebrew word *rekebh* in verses 7 and 9, is found again in xxii. 6. Also the mention of asses and camels in verse 7, no doubt as beasts of burden, occurs again in xxx. 6. Lastly, the remarkable combination of similar words in this same verse—which, literally rendered, reads thus: " Let him attend attentively, aye, very attentively "—finds its best parallel in xxiv. 16, referred to above. It thus appears that the " Isaianic colouring " is not only very marked, but well maintained throughout. Inasmuch, then, as this prophecy bears such frequent marks of Isaianic authorship, and is further seen to be so well interpreted in the light of events, which with one exception, viz. the downfall of Assyria, took place in the days of Isaiah, I submit that it ought without doubt to be regarded as one of those inspired Burdens " which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see."[2]

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[1] See chaps. v. 28, xvii. 13, xxix. 6.

[2] Isa. xiii. 1.

CHAPTER XVI

THE BURDEN OF DUMAH AND THE BURDEN UPON ARABIA

"The drawn sword, and the bent bow, and the grievousness of war."—Isa. xxi. 15.

THE Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea is followed by the Burden of Dumah and the Burden upon Arabia. These short prophecies will form the subject of this chapter. Though very briefly expressed, they are very full of suggestion, and with the help of the Assyrian inscriptions and the researches of modern travellers there is a great deal that can be said about them. Before, however, we proceed to study them from the standpoints of geography and history, it may be well to look at them from the literary standpoint by comparing them with the longer Burden which precedes them, in order that we may be assured that all three come from the same pen, viz. that of the prophet Isaiah. Our next endeavour will be to localise the places and countries mentioned, since this adds very much to the interest of the subject and is of the greatest help in opening up the meaning of the passage and enabling us to picture it to our minds. Lastly, we shall, I hope, with the light thrown on them by the inscriptions, be able to ascertain the time of the fulfilment of these Burdens, and so to account for their being placed along with the Burden of Babylon.

In comparing, then, the three prophecies contained in Isaiah chap. xxi we see at a glance that the same dramatic power, which appears so conspicuously in the Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea, is no less evident in these shorter utterances. The prophet not only sees visions, but has the power of making his readers see them too. With a few bold strokes he dashes off pictures so vivid and impressive that our imagination readily fills in the details. Further, we notice a remarkable similarity in point of structure between the Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea and the Burden upon Arabia. Each of these Burdens is divided into two strophes; and in each the second strophe begins with the words, "For thus hath the Lord said unto me," verses 6 and 16,[1] and ends with a solemn declaration that the oracle comes from Jehovah the God of Israel, verses 10 and 17. Now we have already seen good reason to think that the former Burden is from the pen of the prophet Isaiah: we must therefore make the same admission with regard to the latter. Equally strong, too, is the evidence with regard to the Burden of Dumah. The pathetic tone of this most touching oracle, as well as the metaphors employed, are the same that meet us in Isa. viii. 22–ix. 2. In that passage "darkness" stands for the distress and anguish caused by war, thus answering to the "night" which broods over Dumah; "morning," for the return of peace and prosperity. And just as mention is made there of those for whom there will be "no morning,"[2] so it is ominously hinted here that such may be the fate of Dumah when the second and darker night overtakes her. We may, then, reasonably believe that Isaiah wrote all three Burdens, and the structural resemblance between the first and third just noticed, coupled with the intimate connection between Dumah and Arabia, would lead us to suppose that he wrote them all about the same time. This supposition is borne out by the Assyrian records. Viewed in the light of the inscriptions, the Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea, as shown in the last chapter, belongs to the reign of Sennacherib, and found its fulfilment in the destruction of Babylon by that monarch in 689 B.C.: whilst these two shorter Burdens, as I shall hope to show, may be referred, as regards the time of their utterance, to 691 B.C., just before the battle of Khalulē, and met with their fulfilment in the following year. In point of time, then, all three are seen to be closely connected. There is also a close connection in the circumstances which called them forth. At the time of Sennacherib's first campaign the Arabs took the side of Babylon and helped Merodachbaladan in his resistance to the Assyrian monarch. Hence it was with a view to his projected swift march on Babylon in 689 B.C. that Sennacherib in the previous year sought to clear the way by an expedition into Arabia. There is thus every reason why the three Burdens of Isaiah chap. xxi. should be found placed together in that Book.

In the Burden of Dumah and the Burden upon Arabia the very dramatising of the subject matter, which adds so much to the beauty of the passage, tends at the same time to throw a veil over the events predicted. "Nowhere else," says Ewald, "do we find oracles of such great brevity, and conveyed in language of such an enigmatical complexion." It is possible, nevertheless, by a study of the geographical names, which occur in these prophecies, to remove much of their vagueness; and that, without in any degree diminishing the force and beauty of this part of Holy Scripture. Thus, in the Burden of Dumah a cry comes from Seir, *i.e.* Edom, a cry plaintively pathetic, and repeated in a tone of weariness, well indicated in the original by the shortening of the last word in the second clause: *Shomēr, mâh millailâh? Shomēr, mâh milleyl?* "Watchman, how far is it in the night? Watchman, how far in the night?" How soon, that is, will the night of terror and danger, of sorrow and anguish, be over? At first sight we are puzzled to conceive how the fall of Babylon can possibly affect Edom. But when we think of Dumah as a most important centre and mart of the commerce of the desert in which Edom takes a leading part, and also as a convenient half-way halting-place on the nearest route between Edom and Babylon, then this touching oracle becomes intelligible. Our study is thus seen to be, not only geographical and historical, but also commercial and political. It is concerned with the growing power of Edom[1] and the attempts made by Assyria to restrain or win over the Arabs and to coerce Babylon, as well as to secure for herself a lion's share in the commerce of the desert and the shortest route from the Euphrates valley to Egypt, a route feasible for the swift despatch of small bodies of troops if not of great armies.

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[1] In the original there is a slight variation in the order of the words thus translated in these two verses.

[2] Isa. viii. 20.

Of the different geographical names here mentioned—Dumah, Seir, Arabia, Dedan, Tema, and Kedar—Arabia is the most familiar, and with the exception possibly of Kedar the hardest to define. It may, however, be stated with certainty that in the Bible as in the Assyrian inscriptions the name denotes, not the whole of that vast peninsula now so called, but only that portion which lies to the north of the Shammar mountains, consisting of the triangular tract known as the Syrian Desert, which extends from Palestine to the Euphrates and has its apex a little to the north of Damascus. The Arabians according to Jer. iii. 2, dwell in the *Midbar*, *i.e.* "the Wilderness" *par excellence*, the *Madbaru* or *Mudbaru* of the Assyrian records, which Sargon speaks of as extending from Rapiqu on the Euphrates to the Brook of Egypt.[2] It was in this *Midbar* that Uzziah, who was helped by God against the Arabians, built towers for the protection of his flocks.[3]

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[1] See Note at the end of this chapter.

[2] Cylinder Inscription, lines 12, 13.

[3] 2 Chron. xxvi. 7, 10.

But besides the *country* of Arabia the inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal, mention a *kingdom* of Arabia, which appears to have had for its capital the fortress of Adumû, to be identified, as we shall presently see, with Isaiah's Dumah. This kingdom of Arabia is referred to in Jer. xxv. 24 and Ezek. xxvii. 21, and doubtless also in the Isaianic Burden; but it is not a little remarkable that Dumah, or Adumû, the centre of that kingdom, has here a separate Burden of its own. The most likely explanation is that at this crisis Dumah, if not a dependency of Mount Seir, was at any rate subject to Edomite influence. In endeavouring to locate the kingdom of Arabia some help may be obtained from the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal. Ashurbanipal informs us that Vaiteh king of Arabia sent succours to his rebellious brother, Shamash-shum-ukin king of Babylon; and further, that the forces of Vaiteh were defeated by the Assyrians along the eastern border of Palestine, so that Vaiteh was driven to seek a refuge with his ally, Nathan the Nabathaean, whose land is described as "distant" from Assyria, presumably more distant than the kingdom of Arabia.[1] These statements of the Assyrian king all point to the Jowf oasis as the nucleus of this ancient kingdom, inasmuch as the Jowf holds a central position with regard to Babylon, Eastern Palestine, and the country of the Nabathaeans.

Now the chief tribe of the kingdom of Arabia, according to the Isaianic Burden, are the "Children of Kedar." Similarly in Ezek. xxvii. 21 we read of "Arabia and all the princes of Kedar." The words suggest some close connection between Arabia and Kedar, without permitting us to look on the two as identical. Exactly the same impression is conveyed by the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal. On one of his cylinders Ashurbanipal calls Vaiteh "king of Arabia"; on another, "king of Kedar."[2] In the former inscription he states that after Vaiteh had fallen into his hands, his wife Adija, who is styled "queen of Arabia," was captured along with Ammuladi "king of Kedar." Then later he tells how he appointed Abiyateh the Kedarene to succeed Vaiteh on the throne of Arabia.[3] He also speaks of the "Kedarenes of Vaiteh son of Bir-Dadda king of Arabia."[4] It would thus appear that the tribe of Kedar, being a purely nomadic people, were vassals of the sovereigns of Arabia, whose capital city of Adumû appears to have lain in the heart of their deserts.

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[1] Rassam Cylinder, col. vii. 107–124, and viii. 57.

[2] *Ibid.* col. vii. 83, also Cylinder B, col. vii. 87, 88.

[3] *Ibid.* col. viii. 15, 24, 25, 31, 46, 47, and col. ix. 16, 17.

[4] *Ibid.* col. ix. 2.

In times of peace the kingdom of Arabia, having a fixed geographical centre in the group of oases near to Adumû, would naturally exercise a supremacy over the neighbouring tribes; but in times of war "the mighty men of the children of Kedar" would be apt to assert themselves.

The Biblical Dumah, which we have identified with the Assyrian Adumû, is the next geographical name which calls for our attention. *Dumah* is the Hebrew for "silence." Hence Ewald would render the title of this second Burden "High Oracle of Silence." But such a rendering is inadmissible for the reason that the titles of all the other Isaianic Burdens contain the name or description of some place or country. Equally inadmissible is the view of the Septuagint that *Dumah* stands for Edom. This is a mere guess, arising out of the mention of Seir, and may be placed side by side with their confounding Tema with Teman.[1] A far more rational conjecture is to identify the Dumah and Tema of these short Burdens with the two sons of Ishmael mentioned in Gen. xxv. 13–15. Just as Kedar and Nebaioth there stand for tribes of nomad Arabs, so Dumah and Tema represent settled communities. They are, in fact, the Biblical names of the two chief oases of ancient Arabia. Dumah is the lovely oasis, or rather group of oases, known as the Jowf, one of whose chief towns, now called Jowf, bore till lately the name of Dûmat el-Jandal, "the rocky Dumah." Tema is the oasis and town of Teima.

The Jowf, or "Hollow," according to the traveller Palgrave, is "a large oval depression, sixty or seventy miles long by ten or twelve broad; lying between the northern desert that separates it from Syria and the Euphrates, and the southern Nefûd, or sandy waste, interposed between it and the nearest mountains of the central Arabian plateau, where it first rises at Jebel Shomer."[2] The same writer gives us a very striking description of his first sight of the Jowf: "A broad steep valley, descending ledge after ledge till its innermost depths are hidden from sight amid far-reaching shelves of red rock, below everywhere studded with tufts of palm groves and clustering fruit trees in dark green patches down to the furthest end of its windings; a large brown mass of irregular masonry crowning a central hill; beyond, a tall and solitary tower overlooking the opposite bank of the hollow; and further down, small round turrets and flat housetops half buried amid the garden foliage; the whole plunged in a perpendicular flood of light and heat: such was the first aspect of the Jowf as we now approached it from the west."[1] Again, a little later he writes, "The gardens of the Jowf are much celebrated in this part of the east, and justly so. They are of a productiveness and variety superior to those of Jebel Sherra or of Upper Nejd, and far beyond what the Hedjaz and its neighbourhood can offer. Here for the first time in our southward course we found the date-palm a main object of cultivation. However, the palm is by no means alone here. The apricot and the peach, the fig-tree and the vine, abound throughout these orchards, and their fruit surpasses in copiousness and flavour that supplied by the gardens of Damascus and the hills of Syria and Palestine. In the interval between the trees or in the fields beyond, corn, leguminous plants, gourds, melons, etc., etc., are widely cultivated. Here, too, for the last time the traveller bound for the interior sees the irrigation, indispensable to all growth and tillage in this droughty climate, kept up by running streams of pure water, whereas in the Nejd and its neighbourhood it has to be laboriously procured from wells and cisterns."[2] So, then, that Dumah should appear on the page of prophecy as well as in the Assyrian inscriptions is not at all surprising in view of the size and amazing fertility of this desert province. The same thought strikes us when we go on to consider its unique central position. For this famous oasis, which lies a little to the north of a straight line drawn from the head of the Gulf of Akabah to the mouth of the Euphrates and is nearer to Palestine than to the Euphrates in the ratio of three to four, is situated on the shortest and most direct route from Egypt to the Euphrates valley, and also lies midway between Damascus and Hail in Central Arabia. Thus its geographical position, no less than its marvellous fertility, could not fail to make it a post of great importance at this period of Assyrian history, when the affairs of Babylon demanded constant attention and the projected conquest of Egypt required the control of Arabia.

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[1] Gen. xxv. 15, Job vi. 19, Isa. xxi. 14, Jer. xxv. 23 (xxxii. 23 in Septuagint).

[2] Palgrave, *Journey through Central Arabia*, vol. i, p. 56.

At first sight the Isaianic Burden gives the impression that Dumah belonged to Edom, for the voice that enquires so anxiously how soon the night will be over calls to the prophet out of Seir. This is a little surprising when we consider that the Jowf, which lies due east of Edom, is separated from that country by more than 200 miles of flat, arid, stony desert. On the other hand, we must remember that the Jowf lies nearer to Edom than to any other country, and that in the age preceding this, viz. in the days of Ahaz, Edom had become possessed of the port of Elath[3] on the Red Sea. Further, the possession of the Jowf by Edom in 690 B.C. is hardly more surprising than the incidental statement in Lam. iv. 21, where Edom is addressed as having settlements in the land of Uz. For Wetzstein has brought forward some very strong arguments to show that Uz, the home of the patriarch Job, must be located in the western corner of the Hauran, due east of the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. Now with this acquisition of Uz by the Edomites we may connect their seizure of the Jowf, which is easily approached from the Hauran by way of the Wady Sirhan, a wady well supplied with water to within 15 miles of the Jowf. The Edomites may either have advanced from the Jowf to the land of Uz, or from the land of Uz to the Jowf.

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[1] Palgrave, *Journey through Central Arabia*, vol. i, p. 46.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 58.

[3] 2 Kings xvi. 6, R.V.M.

We are not, however, obliged to look upon the Jowf as actually in the hands of Edom at the time when these Burdens were uttered. It will be quite sufficient if we can show that this oasis came within the sphere of Edomite influence; and this, the Burden upon Arabia enables us to do. That Burden points to the traffic of the desert as carried on by the Dedanites. Dedan lies to the south of Edom; and it is possible, as may be gathered from Ezek. xxv. 13, that it formed at one time part of an enlarged Edom.[1] In any case Dedan lay well within the sphere of Edomite influence, so that the Dedanite caravans, which are driven out of their course by the war in Arabia, may be looked upon as making their way across the desert from Babylon by the Jowf to Edom. Now should Dumah be seized by the Assyrians, these caravans will be in danger of being captured and the desert traffic of being diverted, to the great loss of Edom. For Edom is a commercial as well as a military people. Esau was to live by the sword, but he was also to have a fruitful land as well as Jacob.[2] Hence a modern traveller, describing the heritage of Esau writes, "The country is extremely fertile . . . Goodly streams flow through the valleys, which are filled with trees and flowers; while on the uplands to the east rich pasture-lands and cornfields may everywhere be seen.[3] Edom, therefore, has her exports: she has, also, her imports. For Arabia is the land of flocks and herds, and of camels without number.[4] After Ashurbanipal's campaign in Arabia camels were sold at Nineveh at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ shekels, though the normal price was $1\frac{2}{3}$ mana,

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[1] "I will stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; even unto Dedan shall they fall by the sword."

[2] Gen. xxvii. 39.

[3] Palmer, *Desert of the Exodus*, vol. ii, p. 430.

[4] Isa. lx. 6, 7.

i.e. 100 shekels.[1] Arabia was also the country of spices: see 1 Kings x. 10. "It is the only country," says Herodotus, "which produces frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and ladanum": adding, after some curious details as to how they are obtained, "Concerning the spices of Arabia let no more be said: the whole country is scented with them, and exhales an odour marvellously sweet."[2] The traffic of Edom, being thus considerable, was carried on by water as well as by land. It was doubtless with this object in view that she obtained from Rezin of Syria the port of Elath on the Red Sea.[3] Hence at her fall the "cry thereof is heard in the Red Sea."[4] Edom, being thus a commercial nation, the fate of such an important centre as the Jowf, *i.e.* of Dumah, is of great consequence to her, and hence the anxious cry which reaches the prophet's ear is described as coming from Seir.

Tema, the modern Teima, the second main oasis of ancient Arabia, lies some 200 miles almost due south of the Jowf. We are indebted to the traveller, C. M. Doughty, for the following description of this oasis: "Delightful now was the green sight of Teima, the haven of our desert: we approached the tall island of palms, enclosed by long clay orchard walls, fortified with high towers. Teima is a shallow, loamy, and very fertile old flood-bottom in these high open plains, which lie out from the west of Nedj. The lighthouse turrets of sun-dried brick are intended to guard the orchards like the vineyard tower in the Gospel parable. We entered between grey orchard walls overlaid with blossoming boughs of plum-trees." The height of this oasis is 3,400 feet above sea-level. Doughty speaks of it as "very healthy because of the high desert of pure air lying all round": also, as "very prosperous; no ruined houses, broken walls, and abandoned fields, as in most places in Arabia."[5] Teima, unlike the Jowf, being only a *shallow* flood-bottom, its water supply is derived from beneath, viz. from a great well-pit, El Haddaj, described as irregularly four-sided, some fifty feet across, and seven fathoms down to the waters, which are of a bluish colour and well out strongly from the sand rock. "The Haddaj," according to Doughty, "is as a great heart of Teima, her many waters, led outward to all sides in little channels, making green the whole oasis: other well-pits there are only in the outlying hamlets." He adds that the oasis produces wheat, barley, plums, pomegranates, figs, citrons, vines, and above all palms; and that in the midst of every plantation of palms is a pond fed from the Haddaj, from which the ground is kept moist by irrigation. Teima is mentioned by Tiglathpileser along with Sheba and Ephah.[1] It is undoubtedly the "Tema in Amurru," whither Nabonidus retired for the greater part of his reign, leaving his son Belshazzar as king in Babylon.[2] Teima being thus selected as his residence by the last native king of Babylon, it is not surprising that the traces of antiquity are more plainly visible here than at the Jowf (Dumah). At the Jowf Palgrave could only find in the southern wall of the citadel some stones of huge size and exactly squared, which seemed to indicate the early date of the fabric. At Teima, not only is the Haddaj described by Doughty as a work of the ancients, but he also speaks of three miles of stone walling as marking the limits of the ancient town, and makes mention of certain rude pillars near the present mosque. However, the strongest testimony to the antiquity of Teima is the famous Teima Stone, discovered by Huber in 1880 and now in the Museum of the Louvre. To judge from the type of the Phoenician alphabet used in the inscriptions on the Stone, this relic of antiquity must date from the fifth or sixth century B.C. We gain from the inscription a fair idea of the cosmopolitan character of ancient Tema. It records the introduction into the pantheon of Tema of a new divinity, Tsalm of Hajam, whose hereditary priesthood is to be endowed with sixteen palms of the field and five from the treasure of the king. Tsalm is a name of the planet Saturn, called by the Assyrians *kakkabu tsalmu*, "the dark star." On the narrow edge of the Stone is a bas-relief of the new divinity draped in Assyrian fashion, and also of the priest, who bears the name *Tsalm-shexeb*, "Tsalm has delivered." The name of the priest's father, *Pet-Osiri*, "he whom Osiris gave," which occurs in the course of the inscription, is Egyptian; and the inscription itself is written in Aramaic. The fact that Aramaic was the language of the desert helps to explain the introduction of certain Aramaic words and forms into the Burden of Dumah.[3] The question as to whether Isaiah understood Aramaic is answered in the affirmative by chap. xxxvi. 11, where the Jewish notables request the Rabshakeh to speak with them in that language. The cosmopolitan character of the people of Tema, thus witnessed to by the Teima Stone, as well as their commercial proclivities—see Job vi. 19—would make their oasis a natural haven of refuge for the flying Dedanite caravans.

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[1] Rassam Cylinder, col. ix. 48.

[2] Bk. iii. 107, 113.

[3] 2 Kings xvi. 6, where for "Syrians" *Aramim* we must read "Edomites" *Edomim*; cf. R.V.M. *in loco*. The confusion is due to the close resemblance between the "r" and "d" in Hebrew.

[4] Jer. xlix. 21. Note that the fall of Edom in this verse is described in terms similar to those employed in chap. l. 46 to describe the fall of Babylon. A striking testimony, surely, to the height of power to which Edom ultimately attained before her downfall in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

[5] *Arabia Deserta*, vol. i, p. 285.

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[1] Nimrûd Tablet Inscription, Rev., line 53.

[2] See *The Expository Times*, "Contributions and Comments," Aug. 1925.

[3] See Delitzsch's *Isaiah*, vol. 1, p. 385.

For the home of the Dedanites themselves we must look to the rugged mountainous tract that lies to the west and south of Teima, viz. the lava-field of the Harra, known as the *Wa'ar* of Arabia. In the geographical chain "Dedan and Tema and Buz," given in Jer. xxv. 23, Buz has been identified with the land of Bazu, mentioned in Esarhaddon's Arabian campaign, and has been located in the Jebel Shammar to the east of Teima. Dedan must therefore lie to the west of that town. Further, the physical character of the Harra harmonises well with the prophet's warning in Jer. xlix. 8, where the Dedanites—engaged as here in traffic—are counselled to withdraw from the Edomite frontier, and to "dwell deep," viz. in the recesses of their native mountains, that so they may escape the approaching overthrow, which is coming from the north.

"The forest in Arabia," in which the Dedanite caravans are to "lodge," or pass the night, screened from the observation of the foe, must be sought for between the Jowf and Teima inasmuch as the former is the centre of the disturbed district, the latter the haven of rest for which the fugitives are making. Now the explorer Huber tells us that when travelling S.S.E. from the Jowf to Hail on the second day's march he found himself in the vicinity of a lofty chain of wooded hills called El Felouh.[1] The hills were reached at 1.12 p.m., and the last of them was passed at 8.57 p.m.[2] It might thus be possible to identify "the forest in Arabia" with this district. But a better identification than even the wooded hills of El Felouh, which lie rather too much to the east, is to be found in the red sand-desert of the Nefûd, through which the direct route from the Jowf to Teima passes. This is indeed a dry and thirsty land, in which the fugitive caravans might well need succours. "Over all this ground," writes Wetzstein, "you do not find a single drop of water either in winter or summer."[3] And yet "desert for desert," so Lady Ann Blunt assures us, "there is none more luxuriant than this desert of red sand. It is tufted all over with *ghada* bushes, and bushes of another kind called *yerta*."[4] The bosky nature of this tract would, then, allow of its being described by the

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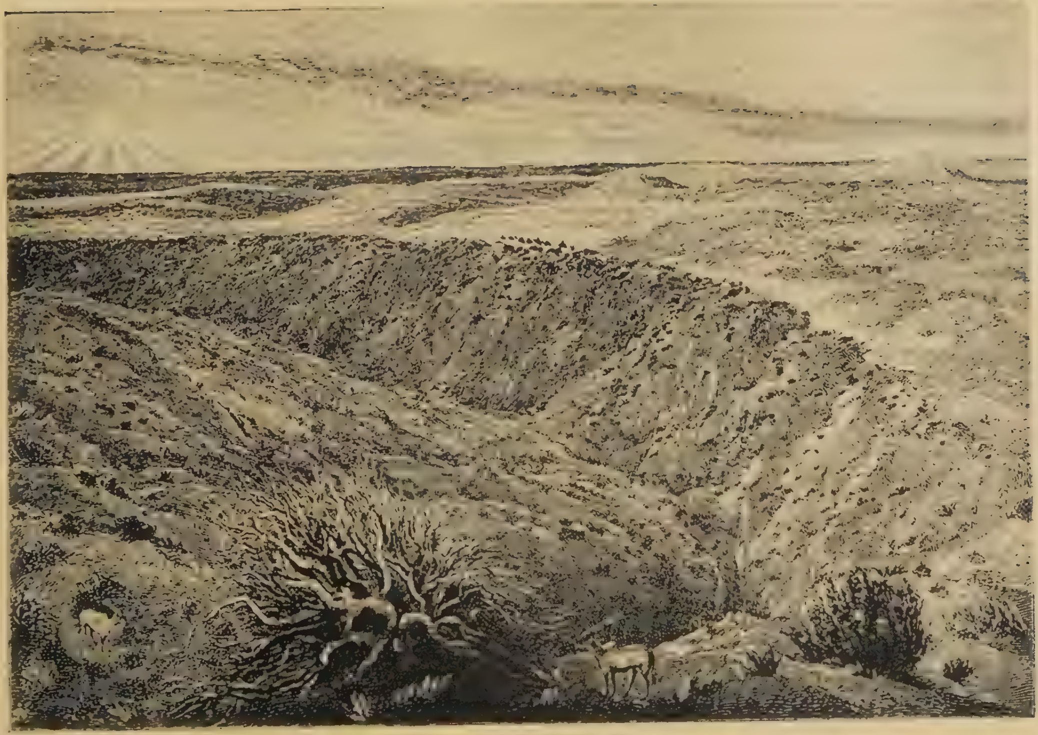
[1] Marked on Stieler's map and in *The Times Atlas.*

[2] *Journal d'un Voyage en Arabie*, p. 50.

[3] Delitzsch's *Isaiah*, vol. ii, p. 533.

[4] *A Pilgrimage to the Nejd*, vol. i, p. 157.



THE FULJES IN THE NEFÚD OF ARABIA.

facing p. 175.

Hebrew word *ya'ar* in the sense of "thicket," a meaning which it sometimes bears.[1] And yet it is not so much the bushes as the remarkable configuration of the Nefûd that marks it out as a sheltering refuge for the terrified Dedanite traders. The Nefûd is one boundless labyrinth of crescent-shaped sandhills and deep hollows, known as *fuljes*. These *fuljes* are all after the same pattern, but vary greatly in size: their width running from 50 yards to a quarter of a mile, and their depth from 20 to 220 feet. In the deepest of them the solid ground is reached beneath the superincumbent sand. It has been observed that the *fuljes* are ranged in irregular strings from E. to W., and that each presents a convex face towards the W., the direction of the prevailing wind, their cusps lying to leeward; also, that in the south of the Nefûd, where the prevailing wind is from the S., the *fuljes* are turned in that direction; so that this strange formation would seem to be due to the action of the wind through long ages on the sands of the desert. In this labyrinth of hollows how completely would the Dedanite caravans be screened from view, and be able to pass the night in comparative safety, for the dry sands of the Nefûd would leave no tell-tale marks to betray their whereabouts! Death from hunger, thirst, and fatigue, would form their chief danger, and right glad must they have been for the friendly succours which reached them as they neared Teima.

We have now sufficiently discussed the different geographical names contained in these Burdens, and it will be seen what a flood of light they throw on the passage. But in order to show that these prophecies met with their fulfilment at the time of the destruction of Babylon by Sennacherib we have to consider three questions: first, the possibility of leading an armed force from the Euphrates valley across the desert to attack the Jowf (Dumah); secondly, the inducement to the Assyrians at that time to undertake such an expedition; and lastly, the positive evidence that such an expedition was actually undertaken by them.

The question as to the possibility of leading an armed force from Babylon against the Jowf can now be solved, thanks to the researches of modern travellers. In a paper by Captain S. S. Butler, read before the Royal Geographical Society in May, 1909, entitled "Baghdad to Damascus," the writer observes that between Nedjef on the Euphrates a little to the south of Babylon and El Jowf there is a distinct line of communication and wells." According to Glaser the Wady Sirhan or North Arabian Jowf—

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[1] Hos. ii. 12 (Heb. Bib. ii. 14), Jer. xxvi. 18.

i.e. "valley" or "depression"—drains into the Euphrates.[1] In Stieler's map of Arabia this wady is marked as running S.E. from the Hauran to the Jowf, and thence E.N.E. to the Euphrates in the vicinity of Babylon. Further, that part of the wady which lies between the Euphrates and the Jowf is marked on the map as "low ground, good pasturage." A definite route across the desert, furnished with water supplies and pasturage, would greatly facilitate the advance of a military force; whilst, as to the distance to be covered, it is not so great as might be imagined. According to Wetzstein "the great enchanting oasis of El Jowf with the city of Dumah is only four *Delul*-marches to the S.W. of Babylon."[2] In view of the above facts it would evidently be easier to conduct an armed force to the Jowf from the Euphrates or from Damascus than from any other quarter, but preferably from the Euphrates. When then we bear in mind the spirit shown by the Assyrians in overcoming obstacles, and more especially in executing long desert marches, we cannot suppose that they would find any so great difficulty in marching from the Euphrates valley upon the Jowf. Secondly, as regards the inducements to such an expedition, the Jowf was in itself a most desirable possession, whilst at the same time it was, as we have seen, fairly accessible. With the Jowf in their hands the Assyrians would command the shortest route across the desert from Babylon to Egypt. But apart from any intention of permanently occupying the Jowf there may have been good reasons for sending thither a punitive expedition to chastise the Arabs, whose sympathies were always with the enemies of Assyria and who doubtless took the side of Babylon when Sennacherib was preparing to attack her, just as at the time of his first expedition, and again, some forty years later than the time at which we are looking, when they helped Shamash-shum-ukin king of Babylon to rebel against his brother and suzerain Ashurbanipal king of Assyria. Lastly, to show that such an expedition was actually undertaken, we turn to the inscriptions of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal.

The Arabian campaign of Sennacherib is found recorded on a half-obliterated alabaster tablet from Ashur.[3] The record runs thus:

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[1] *Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens*, vol. ii, p. 343.

[2] See appendix to Delitzsch's *Isaiah.* The *delul* is the dromedary or riding camel as distinguished from the common draught camel. According to Doughty "a *delul* in good condition will go 70 miles a day for short distances, 60 to 65 for a week, and 50 for a fortnight" (*Arabia Deserta*, vol. ii, p. 519).

[3] Luckenbill, *Annals of Sennacherib*, p. 92.

...... [Telhu]nu, queen of the Arabs, in the midst of the desert,
...... thousand camels I took from her hand. She, with Hazael
...... [the terror of my battle] overcame them, they left their tents,
...... to the . . . of Adummatu they fled for their lives.
...... and Adummatu, which are situated in the desert
...... of thirst, wherein there are no feeding or drinking places
.... the city of Adu[mmatu] ....
....

The name of the Arabian queen, of which only the last syllable is legible on the tablet, is obtained from the annals of Ashurbanipal. She was no doubt the wife of Hazael, whom Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal style "king of Arabia." The plural form of the verb "are situated," in line 5, indicates the existence of other cities in "Arabia" besides Adummatu. This agrees with what we know of the Jowf oasis, which contains other towns besides Dûmat el-Jandal. The all but wiped out 7th line probably recorded the capture of Adummatu by Sennacherib as stated by Esarhaddon in the inscription at which we are next to look.

Esarhaddon, purposing to invade Egypt, sought to placate the Arabs, whose assistance would be most useful to him in crossing the desert between Palestine and Egypt. About 675 B.C. an opportunity was offered to him to do this, which he was not slow to seize, as the following record shows :

"Adumû, a fortress in Arabia, which Sennacherib king of Assyria, the father who begat me, captured, and the goods, the treasures, and the gods thereof he carried away to Assyria :—Hazael king of Arabia came with his costly present to Nineveh the city of my lordship, and kissed my feet. I granted him mercy. Those gods I renovated : I wrote upon them the might of Ashur my lord and the inscription of my name, and I gave them back to him. Tabua, who had been brought up in my palace, I appointed to sovereignty over them. Along with her gods I sent her back to her land. I added 65 camels to the former tribute imposed by my father, and I laid it upon him. Afterwards fate carried off Hazael, and I set on his throne his son Jahlu. 50 camels and 1000 bundles of spices I added to the tribute paid by his father, and placed it on him."[1] From the above record compared with that of Sennacherib we see that the Arabian fortress was called both Adumû and Adummatu. It is thus seen to be the Dumatha of Pliny and the Biblical Dumah, which is found written Idûma in the Septuagint of 1 Chron. i. 30, and in some copies of Gen. xxv. 14, and is to be identified, as stated above, with the chief town of the Jowf oasis, known till recently as Dûmat el-Jandal " the rocky Dumah."

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[1] Esarhaddon : Cylinders A and C, col. ii. 55–iii. 24.

Turning next to the inscriptions of Ashurbanipal, we meet with the following curious reference:

" . . . Telhunu, the priestess of Dilbat, who was angry with Hazael king of Arabia . . . him she delivered into the hands of Sennacherib my grandfather, and wrought his overthrow. She declared that she would no longer dwell with the people of Arabia: to the country of Assyria she took the road."[1] The record then goes on to tell how Hazael appeared before Esarhaddon, and asked for his *goddess* to be restored to him, and mention is also made of Telhunu as her " former priestess," and of Tabua being appointed her successor after an appeal to the Sun-god Shamash. It will be noticed that while Esarhaddon speaks of the gods of Arabia, Ashurbanipal mentions the goddess Dilbat, the Sumerian name of Ishtar the Assyrian Venus, worshipped in Arabia as *Atar-Samain* " Ishtar of Heaven " and answering to the Biblical Ashtoreth. When it is said that the goddess refused to live any longer in Arabia, this is an instance of the delight taken by the Assyrians in making out the enemies' gods to be on their side,[2] and expresses the underlying fact that the image of the goddess and possibly her priestess also were carried away to Assyria. The mention of Telhunu as a priestess of the national divinity throws light on the prominence given in the inscriptions to the Arabian queens: the kings, though taking the lead in war, occupying otherwise the place of princes consort. It also throws a most interesting light on the position occupied by the queen of Sheba. May she not very well have been one of these royal priestesses who was led to seek after a purer faith, seeing that her visit to Solomon certainly partook of a religious character: it was " the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah "[3] which brought her to Jerusalem?

It now only remains to ascertain the date of Sennacherib's Arabian campaign, and to note very closely the state of things during that critical period before the destruction of Babylon; for we shall thus ascertain the time and circumstances under which these oracles were written and under which they were fulfilled.

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[1] Streck's *Ashurbanipal*, pp. 217, 223.

[2] Isa. xxxvi. 10.

[3] 1 Kings x. 1.

On the Alabaster Slab Inscription, after an abbreviated account of the eight royal campaigns recorded on the Taylor Cylinder we come to the sadly obliterated account of the campaign in Arabia, *this being the last event recorded on the tablet and no mention being made of the sack of Babylon.* It follows from this that the tablet must have been written after the battle of Khalute, which closed the eighth campaign in 691 B.C., and before the sack of Babylon in 689 B.C.; so that the Arabian campaign must be assigned to the intervening year, 690 B.C. Now the Burden upon Arabia was to be fulfilled "within a year according to the years of an hireling," *i.e.* within an exact year after its utterance. We must, therefore, assign this oracle to 691 B.C., the year of the battle of Khalulē; and if, as seems all but certain, we regard the Burden of Dumah—Dumah being the capital of the kingdom of Arabia—as uttered at the same time, then we can go further and say that these two oracles were written *before that battle, when Sennacherib was advancing south expecting to capture Babylon.* For then, indeed, the Arabs, whose sympathies were with Babylon, may well have had gloomy forebodings: so that in this southern advance of the Assyrians we seem to see the coming of the dark night which envelops Dumah. But Sennacherib, despite his boasted valour, found his match at Khalulē. What he claims as a victory, the Babylonian Chronicle records as a defeat; and the record is at any rate true in this sense, that he was unable to advance a step further. This approaching check to the Assyrian arms may well have been the "morning" predicted in the Burden of Dumah—"the morning cometh"—for with the repulse at Khalulē the Arabs would naturally think that the danger was over. The pendulum would then swing to the opposite extreme: from despair to false confidence. Hence the added warning: "*and also the night.*" Within a year of the prophetic utterance the Assyrian army will make a descent upon Arabia: the peaceful caravans of the Dedanites will be in full flight toward the south, preferring the risk of perishing in the thirsty Nefûd to certain massacre at the hands of the enemies' cavalry: the Kedarene archers, mounted on their camels as we see them on the bas-reliefs,[1] will be forced to turn tail before the better disciplined, better mounted, and better armed Assyrians, and being thus shot at from behind will be slain in great numbers: for "all the glory of Kedar shall fail; and the residue of the number of the archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be few: for Jehovah the God of Israel hath spoken it." It appears, then, from the tone of these Burdens that Sennacherib's advance into Arabia would come as a surprise, as in all probability it did. For when the Assyrian army marched south in 690 B.C., the Arabs could hardly have anticipated a descent on the Jowf. They would think that Babylonia was about to be harried, and it must have been with blank dismay that they saw the Assyrian cavalry turn aside and sweep up the Wady Sirhan. A further proof that Arabia was taken by surprise is to be found in the fact that upon the advance of the Assyrians Telhunu and Hazael were found in the open field. Had they known what was coming, they would, so one thinks, have taken care to keep within the walls of Adummatu.

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[1] British Museum, Assyrian Saloon, Nos. 83–86. Note the Arab tonsure, the hair cut back in a sharp angle over the temples, referred to in Jer. ix. 26, xxv. 23, and xlix. 32 (R.V.), and described by Herodotus, Bk. iii. 8, as done in honour of Bacchus.

That Isaiah felt for the Arabs no less than for the Dedanite caravans is very evident. Only ten years before they had been employed as mercenaries in the army of Hezekiah,[1] and though they failed that king in his extremity, yet still he regards them as victims of the Assyrian like his own people. He not only feels for them, but he would help them if he could: witness the tenderness of his tone in the Burden of Dumah. Are we to suppose that the prophet had really been appealed to by the rulers of Dumah, or is the cry that reaches him only heard in vision? Probably only in vision: just as when St. Paul, standing on the verge of Asia, sees a man of Macedonia, beseeching him, and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." To this appeal the prophet is very responsive. He cheers Dumah with the promise of returning light, and delivers at the same time a faithful warning: but he does more than this. He invites her to inquire again of his God, and to seek for a further message which may be more favourable; and let it be pointed out to the English reader that the very dialect he employs is an invitation in itself, for the words, "cometh," "inquire," "come," are Aramaic in the original, and Aramaic, as proved by the Teima Stone, is the language of the desert.

NOTE

On the Rise and Fall of Edom

The rise of Edom may be said to date from the reign of Jehoram of Judah. In the days of Jehoshaphat a "deputy" was king in Edom.[2] In the days of his son Jehoram Edom "revolted from under the hand of

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, col. iii. 31–33.

[2] 1 Kings xxii. 47.

Judah and made a king over themselves."[1] For a while the fortunes of Edom fluctuated. In the reign of Uzziah she lost her port of Elath at the head of the Elanitic Gulf of the Red Sea.[2] Later on this was restored to her by Rezin of Syria.[3] From this time the fortunes of Edom appear to have gone forward. In Isa. xxi. 11 she is seen either to be in possession of Dumah, or at least to control the commerce of that oasis. After the Ten Tribes had been carried captive she secured a settlement in the land of Uz on the N.E. border of their land,[4] and in Ezekiel's days her frontier is seen to be extended as far as, and possibly to include, Dedan.[5] Besides Mount Seir, or Edom Proper, there is an "All Edom," a Greater Edom, extending far beyond her original border.[6] This Greater Edom stretches southward to Dedan, eastward across the desert to Dumah, northward to the land of Uz, and westward to the Negeb of Judah. This her latest extension may be gathered from Obadiah, verse 19, where, as an act of retaliation, it is predicted that "they of the South (the Negeb) shall possess the mount of Esau." Indeed the growth of Edom was only surpassed by her ambition. As the two Jewish kingdoms fell in succession before the attack of Assyria and Babylon, the thought of her heart was, "These two nations, and these two countries shall be mine and we will possess it."[7]

What was the end of Edom's ambitious career, and when did it take place? It took place about a year and a half after the fall of Jerusalem. According to Ezekiel's system of dating Jerusalem fell on 11.4.9., *i.e.* on the 9th day of the 4th month of the 11th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin: see Jer. xxxix. 1, 2. In Ezek. xxxii. 17–32 is a prophecy dated 12.–.15, in which Edom is spoken of as gone down to Sheol. As this prophecy is preceded by one date 12.12.1, we are justified in filling up its date thus: 12.12.15. As Edom is last but one of the nations there said to have disappeared, we are also justified in dating her fall about the time last mentioned. In harmony with this early disappearance of Edom is the fact that Josephus, when recording Nebuchadnezzar's campaign against Egypt in the 5th year after the fall of Jerusalem, tells how on his way thither he made war on the Ammonites and Moabites, but says nothing about Edom, that nation having been already dealt with.[8]

A single verse in the prophecy of Obadiah sheds a solitary ray of light on the way in which Edom was to be overthrown. As Nebuchadnezzar had employed the bands of the Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites to help him in laying waste the kingdoms of Judah,[9] so he appears to have made use of the cupidity of the Arab tribes, dwelling on the southern and eastern frontiers, to assist him in bringing down the pride of Edom. These tribes appear to have been allies, if not subjects, of the Edomites and thus it was an act of most righteous retribution that the power, which had acted in such a hateful way by the sister kingdom of Judah, should be called upon in turn to suffer like things at the hands of her friends. "All the men of thy confederacy," writes the prophet, "have brought thee on thy way, even to the border." With cold courtesy they have conducted thy ambassadors back to the frontier of their own land, all the while turning a deaf ear to thy entreaties for help. "The men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee." With bland professions of regret and inability to help, they have only been waiting the right moment openly to side with thy foes.[1] "They that eat thy bread lay a snare under thee."[1] In support of the theory that the Edomites were driven out of Mount Seir by the Arabs, we have the fact that in 312 B.C. the Nabathaeans are found settled at Petra.[2] But more telling is a statement made by Herodotus that two centuries earlier, viz. in 525 B.C., the year of Cambyses' expedition to Egypt, the Arabs had already stretched their power to the Mediterranean, and were in possession of all the ports from Gaza to Jenysus.[3] If the Nabathean Arabs had forced their way to the Mediterranean within about sixty years after the fall of Jerusalem, we may reasonably suppose that their movement westward began soon after that event. As Edom would be the first obstacle in their path, there can be little doubt that they were the people who expelled the Edomites from Mount Seir. Still it is to be noted that the prophet Ezekiel, when foretelling the overthrow of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, pictures the two former as delivered over to the children of the east, but predicts that Jehovah will lay His vengeance upon the Edomites by the hand of His people Israel.[4] The explanation is that Edom was not absorbed or annihilated like Moab and Ammon, but only driven out of Mount Seir into the dry Negeb, her latest acquisition. Malachi i. 2–4 is a voucher for her continued existence after her expulsion. The land of Edom, according to Malachi, lies desolate; but the Edomites are still vigorous, and bent on retrieving their losses. Not until the time of Judas Maccabeus,[5] and later of John Hyrcanus, do they receive at the hand of Israel the punishment predicted. After this they were allowed to remain in the south of Palestine, now known as Idumea, only on condition of their being circumcised and adopting the customs of the Jews.[6] In this way they must to a great extent have been absorbed into the Jewish state, nevertheless they appear to have retained a sense of their nationality down to the time of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, when their old hatred and animosity against the Jews broke out afresh.[7] This is the last that we hear of them.

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[1] 2 Kings viii. 20.
[2] *Ibid.* xiv. 22.
[3] *Ibid.* xvi. 6 (R.V.M.).
[4] Lam. iv. 21.
[5] Ezek. xxv. 13.
[6] *Ibid.* xxxv. 15, and xxxvi 5.
[7] Ezek. xxxv. 10.
[8] *Antiquities*, x. 9, 7.
[9] 2 Kings xxiv. 2.

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[1] Obad. verse 7.

[2] Diod. Siculus, Bk. xix.

[3] Bk. iii. 5.

[4] Ezek. xxv. 4, 10, 14.

[5] 1 Macc. v. 3, 65 and 2 Macc. x. 15–23.

[6] Jos. *Ant.* xiii. 9, 1 and *Wars*, i. 2, 6.

[7] *Ibid. Wars*, iv. 5, 1, 2, 3.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BURDEN OF TYRE

"There shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts—upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant figure-heads." [1]—ISA. ii. 12, 16.

THERE are few passages in the Old Testament upon which more light has been thrown by the Assyrian records than the 23rd chapter of Isaiah. The older commentators, guided by the mention of the Chaldeans and of seventy years, very naturally referred this passage to the era of Nebuchadnezzar. But the closer we study Assyrian history the clearer is the evidence that the Burden of Tyre was written early in the reign of Sennacherib, or possibly in the closing years of Sargon, and that its earlier portion received fulfilment in that famous third campaign of Sennacherib, in which Tyre and Jerusalem were the only cities which escaped capture by the Assyrian.

To understand and enter into the full meaning of this Burden we require to know something of the history of Tyre both before and after the age of Sennacherib, and we cannot do better than begin with a scene depicted on that most interesting monument of ancient art, the Gates of Balâwât, executed in the reign of Shalmaneser III (860–825 B.C.), a contemporary of Ahab of Israel. On the Gates of Balâwât, in the basement of the Assyrian Saloon of the British Museum, at the left-hand extremity of Band 5, an island-fortress is seen, separated from the mainland by a narrow strait. Two figures near the water's edge are carrying some small and doubtless costly article of tribute to two heavily laden boats, which stand ready to be ferried over. On the mainland opposite a long train of tribute-bearers is seen advancing into the presence of the Great King. Above are written the words "the tribute of the ships of Tyre and Zidon." This scene represents what took place in 859 B.C. It was re-enacted in 842, the 18th year of Shalmaneser, when, as recorded on a fragment of his annals, he

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[1] In justification of the above translation I would point out that parallelism requires that the second clause should have some connection with the first. The Hebrew word rendered "figure-heads" is from a root signifying "to be lofty," "conspicuous," and it is noticeable on the bas-reliefs that the prows of ancient vessels were sometimes very lofty and carved to represent a horse's head.

"received the tribute of the Tyrians and Zidonians, and of Jehu the son of Omri." Three years later, as he informs us on the Black Obelisk, "I received the tribute of the Tyrians, the Zidonians, and the Gebalites." Once more, in the year 803 B.C., Tyre, Zidon, Omri (Northern Israel), Edom, and Philistia, all paid tribute to Adad-nirari. It thus appears that the wealthy Phoenician cities, deeply engrossed in commerce, preferred to compound with the Assyrian rather than engage in costly and bloody wars with a great military power so highly organised, and that, as Assyria was no match for the Tyrians by sea and could not capture the Island-Tyre, such a compromise suited her well and saved her the trouble of plundering Tyre's mainland possessions. The short inscription on the Gates of Balâwât is suggestive that Tyre and Zidon were at that time united in one kingdom, and that Tyre in respect of her strong insular position took precedence of Zidon. Though we cannot be sure that this union continued unbroken, yet there is strong evidence for it in the fact that Tiglathpileser claims to have received tribute, first, from Hiram II of Tyre in 738 B.C., and then from Metenna of Tyre *ca.* 729 B.C.; but says nothing whatever about Zidon. For, had Zidon been at that time an independent state, it is impossible that she could have stood out when Tyre the stronger city gave in.

From Metenna the Assyrian took the enormous sum of 150 talents of gold: from Hoshea of Israel he only exacted 10 talents. It may well have been this crushing tribute which goaded the Tyrians very shortly after to break out into revolt. Josephus, when giving an account of the reign of Hoshea of Israel, mentions this revolt in the following interesting extract from Menander, who translated the Tyrian archives into Greek: "Elulaeus, to whom they gave the name Pylas, reigned 36 years. This king upon the revolt of the Cittaeans put to sea and reduced them again to submission. In his time Salmanassis the king of the Assyrians invaded all Phoenicia in a hostile manner, but soon made peace with them all and returned back. But Zidon, Arka, Palae-Tyrus, and many other cities, revolted from the Tyrians and gave themselves up to the king of the Assyrians. Whereupon, when the Tyrians would not submit themselves unto him, the king returned and attacked them, the Phoenicians supplying him with sixty ships and eight hundred rowers. Against these the Tyrians sailed with twelve ships, and when they had scattered the ships of their opponents they took five hundred men prisoners. So the reputation of all in Tyre was increased. Therefore the king of the Assyrians returned and placed guards at their rivers and aqueducts to hinder the Tyrians from drawing water. This continued for five years, and still they held out and drank water from the wells they had dug. And this is what is written in the Tyrian archives concerning Shalmaneser the king of the Assyrians."[1] The above extract from Menander is not without its difficulties. As regards the length of the reign of Elulaeus 36 is probably a mistake for 26. Also, the first clause appears to have suffered from transposition, for the king to whom the name Pylas was given must be Tiglathpileser, who was called Pul by the Babylonians. Salmanassis was his son Shalmaneser V, who during his father's lifetime was appointed prefect of the Mediterranean province of Zemar. It was probably while he acted in this capacity, and near the close of his father's reign, that the Tyrians broke out into revolt and won their great naval victory. The five years during which the Assyrians vainly sought to cut off the water supply of Tyre will then synchronise with the five years' reign of Shalmaneser, 727–722 B.C. In the latter year Sargon, the founder of a new dynasty, mounted the throne of Assyria. His relations with Tyre were of a peaceful nature, and he appears to have reversed the policy of his predecessor and to have acted the part of protector rather than of conqueror. Accordingly, when in 720 B.C., the second year of his reign, the Phoenician cities Arpad and Zemar were in revolt along with Hamath, Damascus and Samaria, Tyre took no part in the struggle. A little later Sargon was able to do the Tyrians a good turn by helping them to stem the advance of the Ionians in the Levant. This, as we learn from the Annals, was in the year 717. The king quaintly alludes to it in his Cylinder Inscription, where he speaks of himself as "the warrior, who like a pearl-diver caught the Ionians like fish in the midst of the sea, and gave peace to the land of Que (the Cilician plain) and to Tyre."

The next sixteen years are a blank so far as concerns any direct reference to Tyre in the Assyrian records, but events were happening which must have tended to alienate her from Assyria. Egypt was the great granary of the ancient world : Tyre the great carrier to other lands of the harvests of Egypt. In 715 a treaty was made with Assyria by Shabaka the Ethiopian who had just mounted the throne of Egypt ; but when the troubles came on at Ashdod, 712–711, Egypt and Assyria were found ranged on opposite sides. A little later, in 708 B.C., when Sargon had taken his seat on the throne of Babylon, seven small kingdoms in Cyprus, having heard of his warlike doings in Chaldea, sent to pay homage to the Assyrian in that city. Whether these were Greek kingdoms or Phoenician colonies, such an act would probably be viewed askance by Tyre ; but that which chiefly decided her policy was the approaching contest between Assyria and Egypt. Accordingly, when in 701 Sennacherib came into the West, Tyre very naturally took the side of her great commercial ally, and thus it comes about that the record of Sennacherib's famous campaign starts with his subjugation of the small but very important Tyrian kingdom. "In my third campaign," writes the Assyrian, "I marched to the Hittite-land (Syria). Lulē king of Zidon, the terror of the splendour of my lordship overwhelmed him, and he fled far away into the sea, and I subdued his land. Great Zidon,[1] Little Zidon,[2] Bit-Zitti,[3] Tsariptu,[4] Makhaliba,[5] Ushû,[6] Akzibi,[7] Akkû,[8] his strong cities, fortresses, places for pasturage and watering, his garrison-towns—the terrors of the weapons of Ashur, my lord overwhelmed them, and they bowed at my feet. Tuba'lu (Ethbaal) I seated on the throne of sovereignty over them, and tribute, the price of my overlordship, I laid upon him. Minkhimmu of Samsimuruna, Tuba'lu of Zidon, Abdili'ti of Arvad, Urumilki of Gebal, Mitinti of Ashdod, Buduilu of Beth-Ammon, Chemosh-nadab of Moab, Malik-rammu of Edom—all of them kings of the Amorite-land (Palestine), extensive regions—brought before me their costly present along with stores, and kissed my feet."[9]

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[1] Jos. *Ant.* ix. 14, 2.

By what route Sennacherib approached Phoenicia we are not told. The romantic pass of Leguia has been suggested; but it seems more probable that he came by that time-honoured path for invading armies, both Egyptian and Assyrian, which runs along the hillside on the southern bank of the Nahr-el-kelb or Dog River, the classical Lycus. At this spot are cut in the rock seven Assyrian bas-reliefs and three Egyptian. The latter are the work of Rameses II, who passed along this road some six centuries before the invasion of Sennacherib. With regard to the Assyrian reliefs, one is the work of Esarhaddon,[10] and one, according to

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[1] Joshua xi. 8, xix. 28.

[2] "Perhaps the island off the coast where is now the crusading castle": Olmstead.

[3] "The House of Olives."

[4] "Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon": 1 Kings xvii. 9.

[5] Probably mentioned in Joshua xix. 29, where instead of "by the region of Achzib" we may read "Mekhebel to Achzib."

[6] The Hosah of Joshua xix. 29.

[7] The Achzib of Joshua xix. 29 and Ecdippa of the Roman geographers. Its modern representative, Zib, stands on a mound composed of the debris of the ancient city.

[8] The modern Acre, the Ptolemais of Acts xxi. 7.

[9] Taylor Cylinder, col. ii. 34–57.

[10] A cast of the bas-relief of Esarhaddon stands in the Kouyunjik Gallery of the British Museum.

Olmstead, of Sennacherib. Arrived in the little Tyrian kingdom, Sennacherib marched through it from north to south, the different cities apparently opening their gates out of sheer terror, without even striking a blow. But there was one city, the most famous of them all, which did not surrender to the invader, and is therefore studiously kept out of sight in the Cylinder Inscription ; to wit "the fenced city of Tyre."[1] For it will be noticed that when Sennacherib mentions Lulē he calls him king of Zidon, and carefully says nothing about Tyre. When, however, we turn to the Bull Inscriptions[2] we are told that when Lulē fled afar off into the sea, he fled from Tyre to Yatnan (Cyprus), and it is further added that the kings of the Amorite-land brought their tribute to Sennacherib at Ushû. This latter item is of importance, since the site of Ushû is known to us from that curious old work, *The Travels of an Egyptian Mohar*, or General, where we read thus : "The country of Authu (Ushû),[3] what is its position ? They are situated above another city in the sea : Tyre, the port, is its name." Hence, in the Amarna Letters of the fifteenth century B.C., we find Abi-milki, the vassal king of Tyre, asking his overlord the king of Egypt that Ushû may be given to him as a place from which to get water, wood, straw, and clay. It thus appears that the spot chosen by Sennacherib for his headquarters was in close proximity to Tyre. At Ushû he must have remained for some time while the different kingdoms of the West, some of them like Edom a considerable distance off, brought in their tribute. In choosing a spot which lay in full sight of Tyre, the Assyrian doubtless hoped that the island-fortress, witnessing the display of his power, would be led to submit to his arms. His policy was the same as when later he sent the Rabshakeh with a large army to sit down before Jerusalem. But though Lulē had fled from Tyre, Tyre did not surrender ; and the cautious foe, not caring to spend more time over the Tyrian kingdom and having done all the harm he could to the mainland possessions of a city which had baffled his arms, went on his way. Among those who paid tribute to Sennacherib at Ushu were the small Phoenician kingdoms of Arvad and Gebal, and in Southern Palestine the kingdoms of Ammon, Moab, and Edom. Had Phoenicia and Palestine been all of one mind the Assyrian would have found his task much more difficult.

Without pursuing further the subsequent history of Tyre, which will be dealt with when we come to consider the closing verses of Isaiah's Burden, we are now in a position to study the earlier portion of that oracle, verses 1–14, and it will be best for me to begin by defining the geographical names employed before I go on to paraphrase and expound the passage.

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[1] Joshua xix. 29.

[2] Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

[3] Sayce, *Patriarchal Palestine*, p. 211. For a map showing the position of Ushu with respect to Tyre see Maspero's *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 185.

Tarshish is Tarsus in Cilicia, the Assyrian *Tarzi*, rather than Tartessus in Spain, which lies far beyond the horizon of Old Testament geography. On this point Gen. x. 4 is decisive.[1] The land of Kittim is Cyprus, so called from the town of Citium on its southern coast near the modern Larnaka. "The isle," or rather coastland," is not Tyre, but the little Tyrian kingdom stretching along the Mediterranean seaboard. The word employed in the original is often used of districts and countries bordering on the sea: compare Isa. xx. 6. Shihor "the black river" is a Semitic name for the Nile, as in Jer. ii. 18; so called from the dark mud with which in flood-time it fertilises Egypt. Canaan—"the lowland," or according to some "the land of merchants"—is the native name of Phoenicia, found also in the Amarna Letters. This is the only passage in the Old Testament where the word is so used. "The Chaldeans," as we have already seen, are the tribes inhabiting the extensive low-lying tract between Babylon and the head of the Persian Gulf. "The stronghold of the sea" is the Island-Tyre, the central point of interest. With these premises the Burden or Oracle concerning Tyre may be paraphrased and expounded thus:

"Howl, ye ships of Tarshish,[2] for Tyre, the port for which you are making is laid waste, so that there is no harbour! no home!" From the land of Kittim this alarming news is made known to the homeward-bound ships calling at the Tyrian colonies in Cyprus. They are warned that it is useless, and probably dangerous, for them to proceed to their destination. "Howl, then, ye ships of Tarshish, for your lucrative traffic is at an end, and there are no happy meetings for your crews at the end of the homeward voyage. Nor will ye be the only sufferers. Be still, be dumb with terror, ye inhabitants of the Tyrian coastland!" That tiny strip of territory, whose natives, enriched by the merchants of Zidon with the harvests of the Nile, have lived on in such affluence and ease, is now through its very wealth become a tempting prey for the Assyrian lion to spring upon. "And thou, O Zidon, mother-city of Tyre, be ashamed and confounded, for a voice comes from over the sea, from yonder lone fortress in the heart of the sea: it is the voice of thy bereaved daughter—'I have not travailed, nor brought forth, neither have I nourished young men, nor brought up virgins.' Tyre, thine own child, is now childless herself. Her colonies are lost to her: they are as though they had never been." This alarming news, that has spread so quickly to the shores of Cyprus, has travelled with equal speed in an opposite direction, viz. to the land of Egypt, and awakens there universal consternation: "they are sorely pained at the report of Tyre." Egypt grieves over the blow to her commerce and ocean traffic caused by the crippling of Tyre: she grieves, too, over a main obstacle removed from the path of one who comes to attack her.

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[1] See the Note at the end of this chapter.

[2] Large sea-going vessels: Targum "ships of the sea." Cf. 1 Kings x. 22.

Now that the Tyrian kingdom has fallen, its subjects will be compelled to seek fresh homes. "Migrate to Tarshish, to your famous colony beyond the sea. Howl, ye inhabitants of the coastland! Is this your joyous city, so proud of her ancient origin, whose feet have so often carried her for trade purposes to distant lands, and are now carrying her away in flight?[1] Whose doing is this? Who hath counselled this concerning Tyre, the bestower of crowns on her daughter colonies, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth? Jehovah hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. Overflow thy land, then, like the fertilising Nile-flood, thou daughter of Tarshish, enriched by thy commerce more than ever before, now that the mother-city can no longer lay on thee her burdensome imposts. Jehovah hath stretched out His hand over the sea: He hath shaken the kingdoms of the sea.[2] At the commandment of Jehovah the fortresses of the homeland are destroyed: it is He who hath pronounced the disgrace of Zidon. She, too, must cross the sea to the land of Kittim; even there to find no rest, since that island now lies within the tyrant's range."

"But dost thou ask, O Tyre, what likelihood there is that such a fate should overtake thy proud empire of the seas? Then, turn thine eyes to another seafaring people in far-off Chaldea. Behold the land of the Chaldeans! Yonder people is annihilated! Ashur hath made it the home of the desert-dwellers. With what ease hath she done it! Her siege-towers have been set up: its fortresses have been razed: she hath made it a ruin! Howl, then, ye Tarshish-ships, for your island stronghold lies waste and desolate!"

How far was this striking prophecy fulfilled in Sennacherib's subjugation of the Tyrian kingdom? That he took Great Zidon and the fortresses of Canaan (Phoenicia) we learn from the conqueror's own words. But the question is with regard to the Island-Tyre, which we have every reason to think that he did not take. Now at first sight, as we freely admit, the prophecy conveys the idea that Tyre will be taken and sacked; but let us look a little closer. "Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste." "Laid waste" in what sense? "So that there is no house, no entering in," *i.e.* no home, no harbour. Tyre, then, is laid waste in this sense that she is no longer a mart and port. It is useless for the great Tarshish-ships to proceed thither when her king is already flying across the seas. Tyre, the stronghold of the sea, now sits lonely on her rock. The prophet compares her to a bereaved mother bewailing the loss of her children. Her case is this: that she can no longer place a bridle upon her colonies, and can no longer as a suzerain bestow crowns. She is no longer the head of a small, but very important kingdom. Her power is gone: her traffic is gone: and many of her principal inhabitants and merchant-princes are flying overseas as well as her king. Yet she is not "laid waste" in the sense of being sacked: she is not, like Ar of Moab, "laid waste *and brought to nought*." Her position rather resembles that of Zion as foretold in Isa. i. 8. She is left standing, but left all alone. Her fate, as predicted in verse 15, is to be "forgotten": to pass out of sight for a while as a political power. The case of Zidon is very different. If Tyre is the bereaved mother, Zidon is the outraged virgin; seeing that the enemy is in her midst, to subjugate, to plunder, and to destroy. Zidon, it is true, is about to be made the head of a kingdom; but it will be only a vassal-kingdom, placed—as the sequel to her history shows—under a grievous yoke. Even now, we may feel sure, many of her inhabitants are crossing the sea to Kittim, in order to escape from the burden and degradation of Assyrian servitude. But the effort will be a vain one; for so strong, so far-extended, is the arm of that great military power that it has already made itself felt even in distant Cyprus.

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[1] "In olden times they brought her gifts from distant lands: now she is carried away to sojourn": Targum.

[2] The words may also be referred to the Assyrian, Jehovah's instrument, who is spoken of in chap. xiv. 16 as making the earth to tremble and shaking kingdoms.

There is, then, no detail of this prophetic Burden, which was not fulfilled to the letter in the conquest of the Tyrian kingdom by Sennacherib. But it may very properly be asked, What proof is there that this Burden belongs to the age of Sennacherib, and that it was uttered, as we have assumed, very shortly before its fulfilment? In the first place, it is clear from the language of our Burden that at the time when it was composed Tyre and Zidon formed one kingdom. Such was the case, as we have seen about a century and a half previously, and such was also the case at the beginning of the reign of Sennacherib. Tyre was then, as the inscription on the cylinder shows, the head of a small kingdom, which included Zidon, and stretched southward along the coast as far as Acre. It is true the Assyrian keeps the supremacy of Tyre as the head of this kingdom in the background, and speaks of Lulē as king of Zidon, but his reason for doing this has already been explained. Now it was clearly Assyria's policy to break up the Tyrian kingdom. Accordingly Sennacherib sought to exalt Zidon at the expense of Tyre. This arrangement had the further advantage that in the case of any rebellion Zidon could easily be taken, since it lay chiefly on the mainland; while the Island-Tyre, protected by its narrow strait, had shown itself able to elude his grasp. It was, then, sound policy to take Tyre's mainland possessions and place them under Zidon.

The united kingdom of Tyre and Zidon, being thus broken up by Sennacherib in 701 B.C., appears to have continued so throughout the days of Assyrian supremacy. Accordingly, this prophecy, which represents the two towns as united, cannot have been uttered later than 701 B.C. I shall now bring very strong evidence to show that it was uttered between the years 703 and 701, only a very short time before its fulfilment.

Isaiah, at the close of his Burden, warns the Tyrians of their impending fate by pointing to the havoc and overthrow wrought by recent Assyrian victories in Chaldea. He speaks of the Chaldeans as annihilated, of their fortresses as razed, and of their country as turned into a desert. To the student of Assyrian history there can be no doubt as to what he refers; for just about this time Assyria inflicted at an interval of a few years two very crushing blows on the small Chaldean kingdoms headed by Merodachbaladan. First, in the years 710–709 Sargon ravaged Chaldea, levelled to the ground Merodachbaladan's capital city, and carried away 90,000 captives. Secondly, in 703 Sennacherib, enraged by the reappearance of Merodachbaladan on the throne of Babylon, inflicted a yet heavier blow. "In my first campaign," writes the conqueror on the Taylor Cylinder, "I accomplished the destruction of Merodachbaladan king of Karduniash (Babylonia), together with the troops of Elam, his allies, in the vicinity of Kish."[1] Then, after recounting his signal victory and the treasure taken, he adds: "By the might of Ashur, my lord, 75 of his strong cities and 420 smaller places in their neighbourhood, I besieged, captured, and carried off their spoil." In a long inscription, written very early in his reign and devoted to this first campaign, Sennacherib gives a detailed, systematic account of this dire overthrow, enumerating the number of fenced cities and villages belonging to the several Chaldean states which he had destroyed, glorying in the damage done to the date-palms and grain crops, telling of 208,000 captives carried away, and ending finally with the following savage note of exultation: "the warriors of the enemy, strong and proud,[1] who had not submitted to my yoke, I slew with the sword, and hung on stakes."

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[1] See *The First Campaign of Sennacherib*, by Sidney Smith, M.A., of the British Museum.

That such terrible doings in Chaldea produced a deep impression in the distant West as shown in the Isaianic Burden, receives further illustration from a curious and interesting discovery made by Prof. Ross in the island of Cyprus. In 1845 Ross discovered at Larnaka under the ruins of the ancient Citium a massive stele, bearing a full-length portrait of Sargon accompanied by an inscription. The portion of the inscription which bears on our subject runs thus: "Also seven kings in the district of Yah in the land of Yatnan (Cyprus), whose distant abodes were situated seven days off in the Sea of the Setting Sun, the name of whose land from distant days was unheard of by any of my predecessors—the deeds which I had done in Kaldu (Chaldea) and Khatte (Syria) they heard afar off in the midst of the sea, and their heart trembled, fear seized them. Gold and silver, *ushu* and *urkarinu* wood, the treasure of their land, they brought to Babylon to my presence, and kissed my feet. On that occasion I had a memorial tablet made, and on it I wrote the might of the great gods, my lords. I made an image of my royal person, and for the prolongation of my life I caused it to be set up before them. The peoples, whom from the rising to the setting sun I had subdued with the help of the gods, Ashur, Nebo, and Merodach, I wrote thereon, and I set it up in a mountain valley in the land of Yatnan."[2] In this inscription, which, as Sargon informs us, was drawn up at Babylon in the third year of his reign over that city, viz. 708 B.C., it will be noticed that he attributes the visit of the Cypriot ambassadors and their homage to the report which had spread in the West of his victories in Chaldea. When, then, Sennacherib in 703 B.C. inflicted a second and yet heavier blow on the Chaldean tribes, the impression already made must have been deepened, so that nothing can be more apposite, or more in accordance with the history of those days, than the way in which Isaiah points the people of the Tyrian kingdom to the recent terrible overthrow of the Chaldeans. Also, before we leave this part of our subject, let me not fail to point out the bright light shed by the discovery of Sargon's Cyprus stele, and the circumstances which led to its erection, upon the prophet's words, "He hath stretched out his hand over the sea, he hath shaken the kingdoms." Whether we understand these words as spoken of Jehovah or of his instrument the Assyrian, they are strikingly suitable to the closing days of Sargon and the early years of Sennacherib, when Assyria was making her power felt in Cyprus and on the shores of the Levant.

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[1] Sennacherib applies the same terms to Hezekiah in some of the Bull Inscriptions.

[2] The last sentence of this extract is partially obliterated, and a few words have had to be supplied in order to complete the sense.

We may now pass on to the Appendix to our Burden, verses 15–18, which the critics tell us is the work of a later hand. It is true that the style is very different, for the Burden is poetry and the Appendix prose. It is also clear that the Burden is complete in itself, for it begins and ends with the refrain, "Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for it is laid waste"—"your stronghold is laid waste." The Appendix, therefore, is a fresh prophecy, written, as I shall hope to show, in the Isaianic period, and therefore presumably by Isaiah himself, and added on to the Burden because it foretells the immediate future of this same city of Tyre. And here it may be well to reverse the previous order by taking prophecy first and the historic fulfilment afterwards. The prophecy runs thus:—

"And it shall come to pass in that day"—the day of her downfall—"that Tyre shall be forgotten"—"forgotten," not destroyed, —"seventy years according to the days of one king. After the end of seventy years it shall be unto Tyre as in the song of the harlot:

Take up the harp,
Pass round the city,
Forgotten coquette.
Touch the strings deftly,
Sing many a song,
That thou be remembered.[1]

And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that Jehovah will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire, and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to Jehovah: it shall not be treasured or laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing."

This appendix foretells that Jehovah intends to visit Tyre with His compassion after a period of seventy years, and to raise her up to a state of even greater prosperity. To this twice-quoted note of time is added the words "according to the days of one king," *i.e.* the lifetime of a single monarch, or the even uniform policy of one ruler. Or again, "king" may be taken in the sense of "kingdom," as in Jer. xxv. 11 and Dan. vii. 17, in which case the kingdom meant is Assyria. At the end of seventy years the depression of Tyre is to cease, presumably through the decline of the power which is holding her down, and she will then become a centre of worldwide commerce.

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[1] Cf. *Century Bible.*

It will be noticed here that the trade of Tyre and her commercial dealings are spoken of under the strange term "fornication,"[1] and that Tyre herself is likened to a forgotten harlot who has again become a favourite, according to the strain of some old well-known song which the prophet quotes. What is the explanation of this figurative language—for figurative it certainly is—which sounds to us so strange and far-fetched? It is probably this: anything which entices and draws the heart from God, the true husband of His people, results in what may be described as spiritual fornication. Thus, Israel being led away into idolatry is pictured by Hosea under the figure of a faithless wife.[2] But here the figure is extended to a heathen nation, inasmuch as the heathen have some knowledge of God and some system of religion. Tyre, for instance, has her professed system and her Melkarth. But the fact is, her commerce is her god: this is what she lives for, what she cares about, what she is wrapped up in. And this commerce is carried on irrespective of the laws of God, for she trades in the "persons of men."[3] The Phoenicians were notorious as kidnappers and slave-dealers.[4] Then it is also said that their fairs and markets were often the scene of the impure rites of their so-called religion. Further, the commerce of Tyre brings her into close contact with all the nations, and she is eminently cosmopolitan; ready to enter into commercial dealings with all the world, and to use all her tricks and blandishments in order to dispose of her wares. These remarks may help to explain metaphors which at first sight seem so strange and unsuitable, seeing that in the last verse of the Appendix we are told that Tyre will not only rise to a height of commercial prosperity, but that her gains and profits, the rewards of her harlotry, will become "holy unto Jehovah." A reference to Deut. xxiii. 18 will show at once that we are here dealing with language which is purely figurative and must on no account be taken literally. The silver and gold, which Tyre has "heaped up,"[5] are to be for the use of "them that dwell before Jehovah," *i.e.* for the priests and Levites in the temple at Jerusalem.[6]

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[1] Cf. A.V.
[2] Hos. ii. 2–17.
[3] Ezek. xxvii. 13, Joel iii. 4–8.
[4] Rawlinson's *Phoenicia*, pp. 161, 162.
[5] Zech. ix. 3.
[6] Pss. xxvii. 4 and lxxxiv. 4.

We may now go forward to investigate the fortunes of Tyre in the period subsequent to the invasion of Sennacherib, in order to find out what light can be thrown on the fulfilment of this Appendix to the Isaianic Burden. In the first place, then, it appears that Tyre and Zidon, having been forcibly separated by Sennacherib, were never again united during the days of Assyrian supremacy. Sennacherib's policy had been to completely isolate Tyre, and in order to do this he had made Zidon the head of the little Tyrian mainland kingdom, which henceforth became a vassal-state under Assyria. But so heavy was the yoke of that power that her vassals were always ready for rebellion at a suitable opportunity. Such an opportunity seemed to offer in the troubles which attended the succession and the early years of Esarhaddon, when Zidon, in alliance with a king beyond the Taurus and backed doubtless by Egypt, broke out into rebellion. Stung by the ingratitude of a city which his father had raised to the first place in Phoenicia, Esarhaddon put down the rebellion with great severity and demolished Zidon, casting its buildings into the sea and carrying its people into captivity. He then proceeded to erect a new city in its vicinity, called Esarhaddon's-burgh. Among the vassal kings summoned to help him in this work we note the names of Manasseh of Judah, Baal of Tyre, and ten Greek kings of Cyprus. Having demolished Zidon with a severity intended to strike terror into all beholders, Esarhaddon, with his eye fixed on the invasion of Egypt, deemed it politic to act in a conciliatory manner towards Tyre, which lay on his line of march. Accordingly, he concluded a somewhat lordly treaty with this city, a copy of which still survives. An Assyrian resident is to watch over the Tyrian territory, and Baal is to obey any orders from the Assyrian king. The commercial clauses are indeed those of equals; but when we come to the sanctions, the Assyrian again appears as overlord, enforcing the sacredness of the agreement by an appeal to the gods of Assyria.[1] Notwithstanding this treaty Baal was still restive, knowing that Esarhaddon could not capture his island-fortress; and when in 673 the Assyrian troops suffered some reverse in Egypt, he hastened to throw off the yoke. A little later, in 671, when Esarhaddon returned to the attack on Egypt, he made a pause in Phoenicia and sought to cut off Baal's supplies. Then, hopeless of capturing the island and having no more time to spare, he went on his way. However, when he returned as conqueror, Baal, finding himself isolated and his commerce falling into the hands of the pro-Assyrian kings of Cyprus,[2] deemed it advisable to make his peace by bringing his daughter to add to the royal harem and by paying his arrears of tribute. On the accession of Ashurbanipal, 668 B.C., Baal appears again to have cast off the yoke, and that king after two victorious campaigns in Egypt directed his third campaign against his rebellious vassal, and by cutting off his supplies and blockading him both by land and sea compelled him to surrender on much the same terms as on the last occasion. Baal sent a daughter and niece to add to the royal harem, he also sent his son, Yakhi-milki, "who had never at any time crossed the sea," *i.e.* never left home before. Ashurbanipal accepted the gift and gave him back his son. One more ray of light reaches us near the close of the historical records of Ashurbanipal, when Assyria was nearing the end of her tether and the time when there would be no more victories to record. "On my return," viz. from the Arabian campaign, writes Ashurbanipal, "I captured Ushû (mainland Tyre), which is situated on the sea-coast. The people of Ushû, who were not submissive to their prefects, and did not pay their tribute, the gift of their land—I made a slaughter among the rebels; their gods and their people I carried away to Assyria. The people of Akku (Acre) who were not submissive, I hung their bodies on stakes and made a cordon round the city. The rest of them I took to Assyria, appropriated as a possession, and added them to the numerous armies which Ashur had given me." It thus appears as the result of our close investigations that throughout the period of Assyrian supremacy, although Assyria could not capture the Island-Tyre, yet she had it in her power to inflict grievous damage on the Tyrian mainland kingdom and to cut off to some extent the food supplies of the Island-fortress. Above all, she was able most effectually to cripple the commerce of Tyre both by land and by sea, and thus to cause her to be "forgotten" as one of the great powers in Western Asia.

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[1] Olmstead, p. 375.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 384.

The revolt at Ushû, as just stated, was soon followed by the decline of the Assyrian Empire. Overburdened with her vast conquests, wasted by her constant wars on an extensive frontier, hard pressed by the advance of the Median power and the inroad of barbarians from the north, Assyria became so weakened that the conquered countries one by one slipped from her grasp and were able once again to recover their freedom. "The time," says Prof. Rawlinson, "at which the Phoenician cities took this step cannot be fixed with exactness, but it was probably between 640 B.C. and 630 B.C. The last Phoenician governor in the Assyrian Eponym List belongs apparently to the year 637. On the whole it is most probable," he adds, "that Phoenician independence was proclaimed about 630 B.C." [1] Such, let it be noticed, is the view of a great historical authority, given quite independently of the prophecy now before us; but it agrees very closely with the Isaianic prediction as to the period during which Tyre would be depressed, for seventy years from 701 B.C.—the year of Sennacherib's invasion of Phoenicia—brings us to 631 B.C. as the time when the depression of Tyre was to cease. That Tyre not only recovered from that depression but rose to a height of unprecedented prosperity, engaging in commerce "with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth," is vouched for by the prophecies of Ezekiel, chaps. xxvi.–xxviii. Indeed, to such a height of power did this Empress of the Seas attain during the years 631–585 B.C. that she was able ultimately to withstand the arms of Nebuchadnezzar during a siege, which according to Josephus lasted thirteen years, and in the course of which, to quote God's words to Ezekiel, "every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled." That Tyre fell at last into the hands of the great king of Babylon, is witnessed, as Prof. Pinches points out, by a contract tablet of the year 569 B.C.[2]

It now only remains to inquire as to the fulfilment of the closing verse of this prophecy. That Tyre's commerce once more revived, that she became like the harlot whose feet abide not in her home, endeavouring, as Kay observes,[3] to win the nations by the gay splendour of her wares, professing to be their benefactor while seeking her own gain—all this is fully vouched for by the Book of Ezekiel. But what about this closing verse of the Appendix: "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to Jehovah: it shall not be treasured or laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah, to eat sufficiently and for durable clothing." What probability is there that this verse ever received a literal fulfilment? Of such a fulfilment it must be freely confessed that we have no record. On the other hand, we are entitled to suppose that just as the religious cult of Tyre and Zidon in the days of Ahab made itself felt in the land of Israel, so under favourable circumstances the religion of Jehovah may have made itself felt in Phoenicia, for the Phoenicians were a very receptive people and ready to take in ideas from other nations. We need not, indeed, suppose that they discarded the worship of Baal and adopted that of Jehovah. But they may have gone so far as to acknowledge the God of Israel as one god among many. Indeed some evidence can be brought forward to show that they did this. The Tyrian king who sought for pardon at the hands of Ashurbanipal had called his son by this remarkable name, Yakhi-milki. This is nothing else than the name Malchiah, or Malki-Yah, written the other way about ; and signifies "Jah is my king."[1] Now it would be most interesting to know what led him to give such a name to his son. May it not have been some strong fellow-feeling between Tyre and Judah? They had both been in the same camp, and had both experienced a similar fate. Sennacherib took all the Tyrian cities except the Island-Tyre, and all the fenced cities of Judah except Jerusalem. Also, that Tyre herself escaped further molestation was due to the disaster which befell an Assyrian army in Jehovah's land and before Jehovah's city, and which was one of the causes which led to Sennacherib's retirement from the West. Since those eventful days both Baal of Tyre and Manasseh of Judah had risen in rebellion against Assyria, and both had been reduced again to the position of vassals. To both, too, their freedom from the yoke of Assyria had come at the same time, viz. about the year 630 B.C. It may therefore be taken for granted that a strong fellow feeling must have existed between these two states. They had suffered in the past, and they were able to rejoice together in the present. Now the presumable time of their common deliverance from the yoke of Assyria fell into the reign of the godly Josiah. Josiah began to reign in 639 B.C., and in the 12th year of his reign, 628 B.C., he commenced his efforts to purge the land of idolatry. The removal of Assyria's strong hand had made it possible for him to extend the area of his religious reforms far beyond the limits of the little kingdom of Judah and even as far north as Naphtali on the borders of the Tyrian kingdom,[2] for, as Cheyne points out, he regarded himself as the rightful king of both north and south—the legal representative of David and Solomon.[3] Now it was in the course of Josiah's religious reforms that the temple was found to stand in need of extensive repairs. Stone had to be brought, we are told, and timber for couplings, and to make beams for the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.[4] Even the Holy of Holies itself seems to have needed repairs.[5] Historical tradition of what had been done in the days of Solomon would lead Josiah to turn his eyes northward to the little Tyrian kingdom for a supply of cedar wood as well as of skilled workmen, "for there is not among us," writes Solomon to Hiram, "any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Zidonians."[6] On the other hand, with regard to

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[1] Rawlinson's *Phoenicia*, pp. 149–150. [2] Pinches' *Old Testament*, p. 401.

[3] *Speaker's Commentary*.

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[1] *Cf.* Eli-melek (Elimelech, Ruth i. 2) and Malki-El (Malchiel. Gen. xlvi. 17).

[2] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6.

[3] *Jeremiah: His Life and Times*, p. 95.

[4] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 11.

[5] *Ibid.* xxxv. 3.

[6] 1 Kings v. 6 ; cf. also Ezra iii. 7.

Tyre it was clearly her policy to encourage trade with the land of Israel as being the nearest source of her corn supply: to quote the words of Acts xii. 20, "their country was fed from the king's country." So it was in the days of Solomon when that monarch gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat and twenty measures of pure oil year by year;[1] and so, too, in those later days of Tyre's revival and unexampled prosperity, when as Ezekiel tells us, Judah and the land of Israel sent to her marts "wheat of Minnith, and pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm."[2] It would, then, be agreeable to tradition as well as sound policy for the Tyrian monarch to deal generously with the pious king of Israel, whose heart was seen to be centred in the sole worship of Jehovah, and to send him an abundant supply of cedar for the temple repairs as well as for his own private use. Accordingly, we gather from Jer. xxii. 14, 15 that cedar wood was fairly plentiful at Jerusalem in the days of Josiah's son Jehoiakim. But the Tyrian king may well have gone beyond this. In the year 621 B.C., the eighteenth year of Josiah, there was held in the renovated temple that celebrated Passover, on which the Chronicler loves to dwell as though seeing in it Judah's last glory. May we not, then, well suppose that on that great occasion representatives of the Tyrian state were present, and that the same thing happened then, which was witnessed at the nuptials of Solomon—"the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift": a gift, we may be sure, worthy of a great commercial people, a gift to the Divine King who dwells in the Holy of Holies, a gift to the earthly king whose friendship was desired, a gift which "shall be holiness to Jehovah," and which shall provide "them that dwell before Jehovah"—the Levite host—with food sufficient and stately clothing.

NOTE ON TARSHISH

In Gen. x. 4 we read "And the sons of Javan: Elishah and Tarshish. Kittim and Dodanim" (preferably Rodanim: see 1 Chron. i. 7). It has long been recognised that Javan stands here for the Ionian Greeks, called by the Egyptians *Huinivu*, in the Amarna Letters *Yivana*, by the Assyrians *Iamna*, and by the Old Persians *Yauna*. This verse thus describes the lands peopled by Greek settlers which came within the ken of the Old Testament geographer. The first of these, probably as being nearest to the Hebrews, is Elishah, called in Ezek. xxvii. 7 "the isles," or rather "coastlands of Elishah." Elishah is the Alashia of the Tel El Amarna Letters, from which we learn that it was a maritime kingdom lying to the north of Phoenicia and west of Hamath. From Elishah the writer of Gen. x. 4 passes in thought round the N.E. corner of the Levant to Tarshish, the *Tarzi* of Shalmaneser III and Sennacherib. Then returning to his base he darts a glance in a N.W. direction over the sea ; first, to Kittim, *i.e.* the Citiaeans or people of Cyprus ; and then, on to Rodanim, *i.e.* the Rhodians. The inhabitants of Rhodes were Greeks from a very early time, and the Assyrian record of Cypriot kings who rendered homage to Esarhaddon bears witness to the presence of a strong Greek element in that island. At Tarzi in 698 B.C. the generals of Sennacherib encountered a foe who with the assistance of a rebellious Assyrian governor sought to waylay the traffic on the Cilician Road running from Babylon and Assyria across the Taurus into Asia Minor. According to Polyhistor these were the Greeks who had made a hostile descent on Cilicia. Sennacherib after defeating them took Tarsus and rebuilt it after the manner of Babylon. In so doing he could hardly fail to benefit the Phoenician colony, in whose hands we may feel sure that the traffic lay. He may also have felt that by thus encouraging Tarsus and regulating the land traffic he was still further depressing Tyre. In which case he was unconsciously helping to fulfil the words, "Pass through thy land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish."

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[1] 1 Kings v. 11.

[2] Ezek. xxvii. 17.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FENCED CITIES OF JUDAH

"Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and builded palaces; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities."—Hos. viii. 14.

THE Scripture account of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah begins with the following brief statement: "Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them." Sennacherib's own account is to the same effect, but more circumstantial. It runs thus: "As for Hezekiah of Judah, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighbourhood, which were without number—by levelling with battering-rams and advancing the siege-engines, by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breaches, I beseiged and captured. 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil." [1] The Assyrian naturally dwells on his successes; but, as we shall see, there is no sufficient reason in this instance to charge him with exaggeration. In Chaldea he had quite recently captured 75 walled cities and 420 smaller cities dependent on them, and had carried away 208,000 captives. Judah was a small kingdom, but it was populous, and the inhabitants of the country districts would inevitably flock into the walled cities on the approach of the invader. But how terrible was this depopulation of its inhabitants! Well might Isaiah speak of the fraction cooped up within the walls of Jerusalem as "the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah." [2] Well might Hezekiah send word to Isaiah, "Lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left." [3]

It will be my purpose in this chapter to seek as far as possible to identify the fenced cities of Judah: then to dwell at some length on the part played by fenced cities in ancient warfare:

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, col. iii. 11–20.

[2] Isa. xxxvii. 31.

[3] Isa. xxxvii. 4.

and lastly to show that the prophecies of Isaiah contain an actual reference to the fall of the fenced cities, which has been completely overlooked by our modern commentators.

The names of the fenced cities of Judah can be gathered in part from the Book of Joshua, where the territory of the different tribes is carefully defined, and the cities belonging to each are carefully enumerated. The same Book also contains data which enable us to distinguish the fenced cities from those which were not worthy of the name. But in making use of that Book we must bear in mind (1) that in later history the frontiers of the two Jewish kingdoms did not always conform to the limits of the tribes laid down by Joshua—*e.g.* Bethel was assigned to the tribe of Benjamin, and might therefore be expected to fall within the kingdom of Judah: whereas nothing is more evident than that it belonged to the Northern Kingdom —(2) that by the time of Hezekiah a large part of the territory, originally assigned to Dan, had been incorporated within the kingdom of Judah. Thus in Joshua xix. 43, 44, Timnah, Eltekeh, and Ekron, are assigned to Dan, whereas in Sennacherib's account they are seen to belong to Judah. Then (3) we must also take into consideration the result of Hezekiah's conquests in Philistia. In 2 Kings xviii. 8 we are told that Hezekiah "smote the Philistines unto Gaza and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city." This agrees exactly with what we learn from the inscriptions of Sennacherib. Sennacherib speaks of Joppa and the neighbouring cities as being under *Tsidqa, i.e.*, Zedekiah, king of Ashkelon. The Jewish name of this monarch bespeaks him a nominee of Hezekiah. His cities would therefore be regarded by the Assyrian as belonging to Judah. Ekron, too, had also lost her independence, her king, Padi, according to Sennacherib having been imprisoned by Hezekiah in Jerusalem. Gath, which was captured by Judah in the reign of Uzziah, seems never to have recovered her independence; see Amos vi. 2. Ashdod, which was also captured by Uzziah, fared better, and along with Gaza took the side of the Assyrians at the time of the invasion. On the rulers of these two cities, and on Padi the reinstated king of Ekron, Sennacherib informs us that he bestowed the cities which he had taken from Hezekiah.

Turning now to the Book of Joshua, the first two fenced cities taken by Joshua were Jericho and Ai. Jericho, when rebuilt as a fortress in the reign of Ahab,[1] appears from 2 Chron. xxviii. 15 to have belonged to the kingdom of Judah. This, then, is our *first* fenced city of Judah. Ai, though its site continued to be inhabited, does not appear to have been fortified again. In Isa. x. 28 it is called Aiath: in Neh. xi 31 Aija. In Joshua ix. 17 we find the names of *four* cities which made peace with Israel, viz. Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth,[1] and Kiriath-jearim. The three first fell to the lot of Benjamin, and Kiriath-jearim to the lot of Judah.[2] Gibeon was "a great city, as one of the royal cities," [3] and was therefore no doubt fortified. Perhaps we may venture to presume that Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim were also fortified. In Joshua xii. 9–24 we have a list of thirty-one kings, distinguished by their royal cities. Omitting Jerusalem, which Sennacherib was unable to take, the following *eleven* were within the kingdom of Judah: Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, Eglon, Debir, Geder, Hormah, Arad, Libnah, Adullam, and Makkedah. We may feel sure that they were all fortified as being the capitals of small city-kingdoms. Gibeah of Benjamin, which occupied a strong site four miles to the N. of Jerusalem, was a fenced city of some importance, as appears from the terrible story of Judges chaps. xix. and xx., and no less from the fact that it formed the royal city of king Saul. In 1 Sam. xxiii. 7 Keilah is described by Saul as "a town that hath gates and bars." Ziklag, given by Achish to David, 1 Sam. xxvii. 6, was, doubtless, another stronghold. Here, then, are *three* more cities to add to our list. In 2 Chron. xi. 5–12 we have a list of fifteen cities "built for defence in Judah" by Rehoboam. From this list we gather *twelve* new names: Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoah, Beth-zur, Soco, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Azekah, Zorah, and Ajalon. Gath, though it afterwards recovered its freedom, was captured subsequently, as stated above, by Uzziah.[4] It was also captured by Sargon in 711 B.C., but appears at the time of Sennacherib's invasion to have been under Hezekiah.[5] *Two* more cities, Geba and Mizpah, on the northern frontier of the kingdom, are stated in 2 Chron. xvi. 6 to have been built by Asa with the stones of Ramah. In 2 Chron. xxvi. 6 it is recorded that Uzziah captured Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod, from the Philistines. Gath and Ashdod [6] have been already dealt with, but Jabneh, on the N. border of Judah and near the sea, adds *one* more to our list. Again, in 2 Chron. xxviii, 18 mention is made of six cities of Judah taken from Ahaz by the Philistines; which cities, as being well within the borders of Judah, were most certainly recovered by Hezekiah when he smote the Philistines as far as Gaza. Two of these cities, Aijalon and Soco, we have already included; but Beth-shemesh, Goderoth, Timnah, and Gimzo, furnish us with *four* additional names. For a yet further contribution we turn to Sennacherib's inscription on the Taylor Cylinder. The Assyrian tells us that when he marched southwards into Philistia, he captured Ashkelon and her four daughter cities, viz. Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Bene-berak, and Hazor. These five cities, as stated above, appear to have been under a nominee of Hezekiah, and would therefore be regarded as belonging to Judah. We thus gain *five* more names. Sennacherib also informs us that he captured Eltekeh, Timnah, and Ekron. Timnah we have already included, but Eltekeh and Ekron supply *two* fresh names. Now let us add up our gains and the result will be as follows: $1+4+11+3+12+2+1+4+5+2=45$. Thus, after much hard fighting, we have captured as many fenced cities of Judah as Sennacherib, less by 1. Where shall we look for our 46th city? The Map of Western Palestine, published by the Palestine Exploration Fund, placed side by side with the cylinder inscription of Sennacherib, will help us to bring the campaign to a successful issue. On this map, nearly half way between the cities of Ekron and Ajalon and thus within the sphere of Hezekiah's sovereignty, will be seen the important city of Gezer, which has yielded so much of interest to its excavators. This city—one of the thirty and one royal cities enumerated in Joshua xii.—lay on the S. border of Ephraim: Joshua xvi. 3. The Israelites were unable to drive out its Canaanite inhabitants: Joshua xvi. 10. It was, however, presently taken by the king of Egypt, and given by him as a dowry to his daughter on her marriage with Solomon, who "built," *i.e.*, restored and fortified, it.[1] Should any scruples be felt as to the inclusion of Gezer among the fenced cities of Judah on the ground of its being an Ephraimite frontier-city, we may substitute for it Michmash, a strongly situated fortress on the N. edge of the deep Wady Suweinit opposite to Geba, which played an important part in Saul's wars with the Philistines: see 1 Sam. chaps. xiii. and xiv. The only objection to Michmash is that in the cavalry-raid, described in Isa. x. 28–32, the Assyrian is represented as leaving his baggage at Michmash—a post apparently already within his dominions—before sweeping onwards with his cavalry to the near neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

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[1] 1 Kings xvi. 34.

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[1] Joshua xviii. 25, 26.
[2] Joshua xviii. 14.
[3] *Ibid.* x. 2.
[4] 2 Chron. xxvi. 6 and Amos vi. 2.
[5] Cf. note on Mic. i. 10 in *Century Bible.*
[6] Ashdod was still a Philistine city at the time of Sennacherib.

It would be rash indeed to affirm that the 46 cities, which we have just captured, are identical in every respect with those captured by Sennacherib. But we may modestly express the belief that if the Assyrian had left us a list of the fortresses which he took from Hezekiah, most of the above cities would be found on it. Further, as the result of our investigations, we are bound to emphasise what has been already stated, that neither as to the number of cities taken, nor as to the large number of inhabitants deported, ought Sennacherib to be charged with exaggeration.

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[1] 1 Kings ix. 16, 17.

As this chapter is much concerned with ancient warfare, it may be well to remark here that the Hebrew language is rich in the terms employed to describe fortresses and fortified towers. The term most frequently employed to denote a fortified town is *mibhtsâr*, often translated "fenced city." *Mâ'ōz* pictures the fortress as "a stronghold": but according to another derivation as "a refuge." *Machseh* is also "a refuge": *mânōs* "a place of escape." *'Armōn* is "a citadel" or "palace": *bîrâh*[1] and its cognate *bîrânîth* have a similar meaning. *Bachan* is a "watch-tower" or "look-out," and so too *mitspeh*. *Metsad* is "a hunting-tower": *metsūdâh*, "a fastness" or "rock-stronghold."[2] *Misgâbh* is a fortress in respect of its height, or of its lofty position: "a high tower" or "high fort."[3] *Migdol* is "a tower" in view of its size and prominence, whether standing alone or in a town wall: *'âshyâh*, "a buttress-tower" acting as a support to the wall: *pinnâh*, "a corner-tower." '*Ōphel*, properly "a fortress-mound," was the name of the acropolis at Jerusalem.[4]

The terms used to describe fenced cities naturally lead us on to consider the points chosen for their sites. These were points of natural strength: the more inaccessible, the better. They were often points of vantage also, from which the surrounding country could be surveyed, and the approach of an enemy descried; such for instance as Mizpah, "the Watch-tower," the modern *Neby Samwil*, a height 4½ miles N.W. of Jerusalem which rises nearly 3,000 feet above sea-level. As regards natural strength the site of Kerak in Moab, the Kir-haraseth of 2 Kings iii. 25, is ideal. Yet Isaiah from the hills around Jerusalem beholding in the far distance this proud fortress which the allied kings of Judah, Israel, and Edom were unable to take, hesitates not to predict its downfall: "the fortress of the high fort of thy walls hath he brought down, laid low, and brought to the ground, even to the dust."[1] Where mountain fastnesses were not to be had, good use was made of hills of lesser elevation. The Book of Joshua tells us that "the cities that stood on their mounds," or *tells*, "Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only": the reason being that as fortresses they would be as useful to the Israelites as they had been to the Canaanites. And yet, though it may seem a contradiction, fenced cities when destroyed, had a phoenix-like way of rising out of their ashes stronger than ever, the ruins of the last city serving to heighten the mound on which its successor stood. Thus the steep mound of *Tell-el-Hesy*, the site of the famous stronghold of Lachish, which rises 120 feet above its surroundings, is found to be composed of 60 feet of debris resting on a natural hill of the same elevation. Where little or no elevation could be found, as in the maritime plain of Palestine or in the wide alluvial tracts at the head of the Persian Gulf, the security of the fenced city depended in great measure on its water-defences. Thus Sargon tells how the people of Ashdod by digging deep enough reached the underground waters, which flow down from the hills of Judah, and so engirdled their city with a moat. He also tells how Dur-Yakin, the hereditary capital of Merodachbaladan, was defended by a ditch 200 cubits broad, into which water was brought from the Euphrates, the surrounding country being flooded at the same time; and then adds that these barriers caused him no difficulty, and that his soldiers flew over the waters like eagles.

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[1] Used in the Book of Esther of "Shushan the *palace*," This word is found under various forms in Assyrian, Persian, and Sanskrit. Cf. the name Baris, given by the Asmonean princes to the tower built by them which overlooked the temple.

[2] Used of the stronghold of Zion: 2 Sam. v. 7, 9.

[3] Used of Moab's "high fort," probably the modern Kerak: Isa. xxv. 12.

[4] Micah iv. 8, 2 Chron. xxvii. 3 and xxxiii. 14. Mesha, king of Moab, uses the word in its primary sense when speaking of the acropolis at Dibon, see the Moabite Stone, line 22.

As to the importance placed on having the kingdom thickly studded with fortresses the words of the Chronicler in 2 Chron. xiv. 6, 7, are worthy of notice. Speaking of the acts of Asa, he writes thus: "And he built fenced cities in Judah; for the land was quiet, and he had no war in those years; because the Lord had given him rest. For he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls and towers, gates and bars; the land is yet before us, because we have sought the Lord our God; we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered." With the above description of fenced cities compare Moses' description of the fortresses of Bashan: "All these were cities fenced with high walls, gates and bars."[2] Since the height of the wall helped to render the fenced city more inaccessible, Moses when describing the fortresses of Canaan, many of which were destined to become later the fenced cities of Judah, speaks of them as "cities great and fenced up to heaven."[3] That such language is no exaggeration, may be gathered from

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[1] Isa. xxv. 12.
[2] Deut. iii. 5.
[3] *Ibid.* ix. 1.

Sennacherib's description, given at the commencement of this chapter of the means he employed to take them. Ashur-natsir-pal speaks of some of the cities attacked by him as surrounded by three fortress-walls, and on the bas-reliefs we often see wall rising above wall with a low wall in front. This low wall is the rampart or bulwark, Heb. *cheyl*, called by the Jews *ben chomâh* "son of the wall," as being a little wall. The rampart added very much to the strength of a fortified city: not only because it had to be captured before any attack could be made on the town wall, but also because being comparatively low and backed with strong earthworks it offered great resistance to the strokes of the battering-ram. Sargon fortified his new city Dur-Sharrukin with wall and rampart; and Sennacherib claims to have done the same by Nineveh, "for which," as he remarks, "the princes who lived before me had built neither wall nor rampart." The inner wall he called "The Wall whose Splendour Overwhelms the Foe"; the rampart, "That which Terrifies the Enemy." Not all fenced cities had ramparts: we may suppose that they were usually constructed when the town wall was easily approachable. Jeremiah bewails the destruction of the wall and rampart of Jerusalem: Lam. ii. 8. When Joab besieged Abel of Beth-maacah, "they cast up a mount," *i.e.* a paved way for the battering-ram, "against the city, and it stood," not "against," but "*within* the rampart,[1] and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall": *i.e.* things had begun to look critical, the besiegers had got within the rampart, and as the context tells us had begun to ply the ram on the town wall. It will be remembered, too, that the rampart of Jezreel enters into the divine threat against Jezebel.

Between the wall and the rampart there was sometimes a moat. This, like the rampart, was intended to hinder and hamper the besiegers; for it had to be filled in before the ram could be brought to play on the town wall. Jerusalem, so Gabriel tells Daniel, is to be "built again with street and moat, even in troublous times": the word here used for "moat" being the same which Sargon employs when describing the moat round Dur-Yakin.

As shewn on the Lachish bas-relief, the wall of the fenced city was girt about with towers, which both helped to strengthen it, and at the same time offered points of vantage from which to attack in flank enemies attempting to undermine or scale it. In Jer. l. 15 the rare word *'âshyâh*, translated "bulwarks" in the R.V., is used to denote the buttress-towers set astride the walls of Babylon. These were square and projected only slightly from the wall.[1] High up in the towers on a town wall are seen gratings to shoot from. These were specially useful in the case of the gate-tower, since they enabled the besieged to annoy their assailants when the gate was attacked. This is well illustrated by a bas-relief in the Basement of the Assyrian Saloon at the British Museum. The subject is an attack on a fortress in Egypt by Ashur-bani-pal during his war against Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia. The town is being assaulted by means of scaling-ladders. Meanwhile a soldier with a lighted firebrand attempts to set fire to the gate. While he is thus occupied, a figure looking out through a window over the gate is seen to be dropping something on his head. The scene reminds us irresistibly of the death of Abimelech at the tower of Thebez, when, on his coming near to set fire to the door of the tower, a certain woman cast a millstone upon his head, and brake his skull.[2] To admit of thus casting down stones, burning pitch, and other missiles on the heads of the besiegers, the towers were provided with overhanging battlements, machicolated, *i.e.*, pierced with holes, through which this could be done unperceived by the foe. These overhanging battlements can be seen on the bas-reliefs, and it is noticeable that in the assault on Lachish the defenders hang their shields on the battlements, thereby heightening the defence, and at the same time enabling them to lay down the spear and use the bow. This bas-relief is a good illustration of Ezekiel's description of the fortifications of Tyre: "the men of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadim [R.V.M. 'valorous men'] were in thy towers; they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about."[3]

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[1] Compare the LXX, *ἐν τῷ προτειχίσματι.*

The gateway towers of defenced cities were used as points of observation. It was from the tower of the citadel in Jezreel that the watchman spied the company of Jehu, and recognized its leader by his furious driving.[4] While the battle was going on at Mahanaim, king David sat in the gate-tower "between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate unto the wall" to take observations.[5] The gate-tower was no doubt massive and of considerable breadth. Handcock, describing the fortified gate of Beth-shemesh, writes thus: "The gate is in very good preservation, and has a narrow entrance and a long passage between side-chambers for the guard and defenders of the fort."[6] It is this breadth of the gate-tower which explains the double gates at the entrance to Mahanaim. The gateways of fenced cities are often represented on the bas-reliefs with folding doors. This was the case at Gaza, where Samson "laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountan that is before Hebron."[1] The English word "gate" is ambiguous: it may mean an entrance, or it may mean the door that closes the entrance. In the Hebrew these are distinguished: the former is *sha'ar*; the latter *deleth*. *Sha'ar* includes the whole structure of the gate, the archway, the tower and even the open space within the gate; while *deleth* is simply the swinging door. In Nehemiah's account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, the different gates, *sha'ar*, are built or repaired, and then the doors, *deleth*, are set up in them.[2] Solomon builded the two Beth-horons with "walls, gates (*dĕlâthayim*), and bars." Here the word for "gates" is dual in the Hebrew; and that for "bars," singular, inasmuch as the two swinging doors of a city gate were secured by a single bar. But since these cities had more than one gate the words are used in a collective sense, and so the R.V. gives a true rendering, "gates and bars."[3] The gateways of fenced cities would be large and lofty enough for the purposes of traffic and to admit mounted horsemen. See Isa. xxiii. 7 and Jer. xvii. 25. But the entrance into the citadel, if we may judge from the ancient tunnel into the fortress of Kerak, would be much more contracted. This may explain the Psalmist's address to the gateways of the fortress of Zion, when Jehovah's sacred ark was to be borne within its walls:—

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[1] Koldewey, *Excavations at Babylon*, pp. 66, 67.
[2] Judges ix. 52, 53.
[3] Ezek. xxvii. 11.
[4] 2 Kings ix. 17, 20.
[5] 2 Sam. xviii. 24.
[6] *Latest Light on Bible Lands*, p. 238.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."[4]

Fenced cities and mountain fastnesses, however strong their natural position, were nevertheless very dependent on their stock of provisions and on their water supply. In Isa. xxxiii. 16 the righteous man is compared to the warrior in a rock castle, well provisioned and with an unfailing supply of water. "He shall dwell on high," cries the prophet, "his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: his bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." The difficulty of getting a good supply of water was met in various ways. At the Island Tyre good water was obtained by boring sufficiently deep to get at the underground waters, which flowed down from the Lebanon beneath the Phoenician coastland and the narrow strait which separated the island city from the mainland. At Gezer, which we have ventured to include among the fenced cities of Judah, a tunnel 219 feet long was bored through the rock in order to reach a spring of water lying 94 feet below the surface. When Asa fortified Mizpah, he was careful to hew out a "pit," to form a cistern for the water supply.[1] Mesha king of Moab adopted a similar expedient in his capital city of Dibon, at the same time enjoining on every householder to look after his own private water supply. "I made two reservoirs for water," he writes, "in the middle of the city. Now cistern there was none in the middle of the city in Korchah: and I said to all the people, Make to you every man a cistern in his house."[2] Hezekiah, seeing that Jerusalem was likely to be besieged by the Assyrians, "took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city." His object was twofold: first, to cut off the water supply of the enemy—"Why should the king of Assyria come and find much water?"—and secondly, to bring the water into Jerusalem as recorded in 2 Kings xx. 20—"he made the pool and the conduit, and brought the water into the city." Of the various archaeological discoveries made in the Holy Land there are few that exceed in interest the discovery of this ancient conduit made by Hezekiah, by which the waters of the Virgin's Fountain outside the eastern wall of Jerusalem were brought underground to the west side of the city of David as described in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30: see also Ecclus. xlviii. 17.[3] To these waters brought under the Temple hill we may refer the words of the Psalmist,

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[1] Jud. xvi. 3.
[2] Neh. iii. 1, 3, etc.
[3] 2 Chron. viii. 5.
[4] Ps. xxiv. 7.

> "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God,
> The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."—Ps. xlvi. 4.

These refreshing waters with their quiet flow were emblematic to him of God's presence with His people in that terrible time of upheaval, the days of the Assyrian invasion, when the mountains of earthly dominion were moved and set rocking amid the surging waves of the subject peoples.[4] But if we thus explain the origin of the Psalmist's metaphor, what are we to say of "the waters of Shiloah that go softly" in Isa. viii. 6, which the prophet in the days of Ahaz contrasts with the waters of the River, strong and many," *i.e.* the incoming tide of Assyrian invasion, and in which he finds another lovely emblem pointing

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[1] Cf. Jer. xli. 9 with 1 Kings xv. 22.

[2] Moabite Stone, lines 23–25.

[3] See the Note at the end of this chapter.

[4] Ps. xlvi. 2, 3.

SUBTERRANEAN ROCK CHANNEL OF HEZEKIAH.

facing p. 210.

to the quiet unmarked course of the Divine Providence which governs this lower world? We may say that besides the underground aqueduct from the Virgin's Fountain there are two other more ancient channels cut on the surface and leading to the Lower Pool of Siloam, as described by Handcock.[1]

But even when a fortress was so fortunate as to have an unfailing spring within its walls, the water supply was not always "sure." A bas-relief of the age of Tiglathpileser III, 745–727 B.C., now in the British Museum,[2] has about it a touch of grim humour such as Assyrian artists occasionally display. A warrior on the tower of a besieged fortress is represented drawing up water by means of a pulley, rope, and bucket, from a well at the base of the tower. The Assyrians, who have carefully marked the whereabouts of the spring, have contrived, unknown to the besieged, to make a hole through the lower courses of the tower, and an Assyrian soldier is seen quietly cutting off the bucket from the rope.

In the attack on the fenced cities both sides would be armed alike, but the advantage of the besieged lay in this: that for the most part they had the advantage of height, and were better protected by walls and battlements, so that they stood less in need of heavy coats of mail which must have much encumbered the wearer. Then, too, they could shoot from their embrasures, or pour down pitch through the battlements on their assailants, all unobserved. Besides the usual arms, swords, spears, javelins, daggers, the bow and the sling, there were even in those early days engines of war "invented by cunning men," such as Uzziah caused to be placed on the towers and walls of Jerusalem "to shoot arrows and great stones withal."[3] These would be used by both parties. As to the way in which the fenced cities were captured, much may be learnt from certain bas-reliefs now in the British Museum, viz. the siege of a city by Ashur-natsir-pal in the Nimrûd Gallery, the storming of Lachish in the gallery of the Assyrian Saloon, the assault on a city by Ashur-bani-pal in his war against Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, and the capture by the same king of Khamanu a city in Elam. The last two will be found in the Assyrian Basement. In the storming of Lachish the city is represented as strongly fortified with two walls, and its numerous towers are seen to be filled with armed men. There is little or no need for a rampart, as the site is a very strong one. This the artist tries to impress upon us by drawing the "mounts," or paved ways for the rams, at an absurdly steep angle. Although the relief is worn away in places, yet, by counting the number of the paved ways still traceable, we find that the artist must have depicted no fewer than ten of these formidable instruments playing on the town wall. The attack of the rams is seen to be supported by columns of archers on bended knee, protected by shield-bearers, whilst in the rear of these are the slingers who formed the artillery of those days. Meanwhile the whole air is represented as filled with stones and fragments of scaling-ladders, but more especially with burning torches intended to fire the beams of the rams.[1] In order to prevent this, each ram-carriage has a tower or battlement erected above it, on and behind which are two men, an archer, and a soldier who with a long-handled ladle keeps pouring water on the beam to prevent its catching fire. At the bottom of the hill are seen bodies impaled, and here and there a solitary slinger with his stock of ammunition on the ground at his feet. But the strangest feature of the picture, and indeed its central object, is a gateway tower, from which issues a string of captives bearing the spoils of the city and on their way to the presence of the Great King. In this way by merging two pictures into one the artist lets the spectator know that the town was captured. The same feature is noticeable in the bas-relief of the siege of Khamanu. In the Scripture account the fall of Lachish is indicated by the statement that when the Rabshakeh returned from Jerusalem he found that his royal master had left Lachish and gone on to Libnah.

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[1] *Latest Light on Bible Lands*, p. 202.

[2] Nimrûd Central Saloon, No. 65.

[3] 2 Chron. xxvi. 14, 15.

In the siege of a town the most formidable instrument of war was the battering-ram. In Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the same word which means "a ram," means also "a battering-ram." This shews that these instruments were so called because they butted against the town walls. The ram-carriage, a case on wheels covered with hides or wicker-work and in part with metal plates and provided with a tower or battlement in the forefront, has been likened to a modern "tank." because the soldiers inside, who moved it up to the town wall and then supplied the motive power, could neither be seen nor got at.[2] On the other hand, the two soldiers on the tower, one of whom sometimes holds a shield while his comrade shoots with the bow, must have been very much exposed. The frame on, and within which, the ram was suspended, appears in some cases to have been covered with a metal dome over the point of suspension, while the beam was shot out between two metal plates. Battering-rams appear to have been of many shapes and devices. The head of the ram is sometimes blunt, sometimes sharp, according as the intention was to pound or to penetrate the wall. In a bas-relief of the age of Tiglathpileser III the head is seen to be two-pronged.[1] Again, in one of the many warlike scenes depicted on the Gates of Balâwât[2] the ram and ram-carriage are merged into one huge cumbrous machine crowned with a swine's head and snout. This animal with a wreath round its neck, a quiet viciousness in its eye, and its body weighted with armed warriors, is busily rooting out the stones in the lower courses of the wall.

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[1] Cf. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Bk. v. 6, 4.

[2] Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, p. 308.

The work of weakening the foundation of the wall was undertaken by the miner, protected sometimes by a high arched shield resting against the wall, sometimes only by a small round shield held over the head with his left hand. Both of these methods are very clearly shewn in a bas-relief relating to Ashur-bani-pal's war with Tirhakah. The high shield, or *pavoise*, resting against the wall, is the "mantelet" referred to in Nahum's prophecy concerning the siege of Nineveh: "they make haste to the wall thereof, and the mantelet is prepared,"[3] *i.e.* the siege has begun in good earnest. While the walls of the besieged city are thus being undermined, an attempt is made at the same time to set fire to the door of the fortress. This is done by a soldier protected by a large round shield, which he holds up with his right hand, while with his left hand he grasps a long pole to the end of which is attached some inflammable material. The above very risky operations of undermining the wall and firing the fortress door are seen to be undertaken under cover of the actual assault, which is carried on by scaling-ladders. Up these press the spearmen with shields in their left hands and backed up by archers. It is this vigorous assault on the town which renders the work of the miner possible. The assault by escalade is referred to in one passage of Holy Scripture. The prophet Joel, telling of the irresistible advance of the locust army, writes thus: "They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war."[4]

Ashur-natsir-pal, who makes his warriors fight in couples, gives us a very animated picture of the siege of a fenced city, albeit some of the figures are drawn quite out of proportion.[5] The aim of the artist has been to show the different means employed in siege warfare, and his picture accordingly is somewhat crowded with details. Thus, while the battering-ram is playing on the town wall, an archer in the tower or battlement attached to it, protected by the shield of his comrade, distracts and galls the defenders with his arrows. They for their part throw down lighted torches dipped in resin to set fire to the beam of the ram. But this is a difficult matter, for two pipes have been fixed into the tower of the ram, from which a double stream of water is made to play upon the beam. They therefore resort to another device, and by letting down a chain noose seek to put the ram out of action. But here again the Assyrians are more than a match for their foes, for two Assyrian soldiers with bent hooks have caught hold of the chain and are hanging on to it with might and main. In the meantime two sappers, protected by long coats of mail and provided with poles like stampers, are pounding the wall; whilst two miners, ensconced in a cavity scooped out in the wall, are rapidly undermining its foundations. When this has been accomplished, a few blows from the ram will bring it down and make a breach for the enemy to enter the town.

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[1] British Museum, Nimrûd Central Saloon, No. 94.

[2] B.M. Assyrian Saloon, basement.

[3] Nahum ii. 5.

[4] Joel ii. 7.

[5] Nimrûd Gallery, Nos. 13*b*–15*b*.

It will be noticed that Sennacherib, when describing the means employed by him to capture the fenced cities of Judah, makes mention of siege-engines. It appears from the inscriptions that these engines were wooden structures and that they were wheeled up embankments thrown up against the wall. These embankments are referred to in Habakkuk i. 10, where it is said of the Chaldean invader "he derideth every stronghold, for he heapeth up dust and taketh it." Compare the corresponding phrase in the Assyrian inscription "pouring out dust" viz. from the sacks in which it was carried. It seems probable that these siege-engines took the form of towers, and that they are the "towers" mentioned in Isa. xxiii. 13, where the Assyrians are described as overthrowing the fortresses of Chaldea by setting up their towers. The root of the word there employed signifies "to examine," "to scrutinize." A very similar word from the same root occurs in Isa. xxxii. 14, and is there translated "watch-tower." This is suggestive that these towers were of considerable height, and that they were intended to put the besiegers on a level with their antagonists and at the same time to enable them to see better all that was going on and the resistance which they had to encounter.

The fenced city being taken, very sad scenes followed. It may be that in the age of Sennacherib war was not quite so ghastly as in the days of Shalmaneser III. We no longer see towers adorned with human heads erected before the gates of captured cities as a warning to future would-be rebels, and the walls of the ruined fortress tricked out and, so to say, illuminated with the heads of its brave defenders, as represented on the Gates of Balâwât. But torture, and that of the severest kind, is still practised, and arch-rebels are depicted stretched on the ground with cords and being flayed alive, as on the Lachish bas-relief. The two features which now stand out prominently are the destruction of the captured city and the carrying captive of its inhabitants. The former had long been the common practice; for, unless the conqueror could use the place as a garrison town, it was to his advantage to raze it to the ground. Israel in their conquest of Canaan preserved most of the fenced cities, because they intended to occupy the country and to strengthen their hold upon it by using those cities as fortresses.[1] But it was impossible for the Assyrian conqueror to act thus: impossible for him to fill his broad empire with Assyrians. It was, therefore, his policy for the most part to dismantle and overthrow the cities which he had captured, or, in the language of Scripture, "to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps." Hence, when speaking of his devastation of certain districts of Elam whither the subjects of Merodach-baladan had fled for refuge, Sennacherib writes, "the cities of those districts I destroyed, wasted, burned with fire, and made them heaps and plough-land";[2] the last clause of the description being a very common one in the Assyrian historical records. Even still more common when telling of the fate of a captured city is the following sequence: "I besieged, I captured, I overthrew, I wasted, I burned with fire." A bas-relief of the siege of Khamanu by Ashur-bani-pal, over which the above words are written, gives us a vivid illustration of how the work was done. The fortress is represented as standing upon a steep hill and surrounded with two lofty walls studded with towers. It has already been set on fire, and flames are seen issuing from the gate as well as from the top of the towers. To hasten on its demolition soldiers are busy pounding the wall with stampers, while others with very modern-looking picks dislodge the masonry. The work is evidently going on apace, for the air is full of stones and falling beams. Then, in the centre of the picture as in the Lachish bas-relief, the artist has introduced a string of captives issuing from the fortress-gate. These, urged on by a helmetted Assyrian, are made to carry forth the spoils of the city. As we look at the scene we think of the prophet's words, "your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers."[3]

[1] Joshua xi. 13.
[2] Taylor Cylinder, col. iv. 33–34.
[3] Isa. i. 7.

The destruction of the fenced cities of Judah and the deportation of their inhabitants was a fulfilment of the prediction contained in Isa. vi. 11. Isaiah on the occasion of his call to the prophetic office asks how long he is to go on uttering warnings to callous hearers. In reply God tells him that his ministry is to continue "until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and the Lord have removed men far away, and the desolate places be many in the midst of the land."[1] For when the fenced city had been dismantled and its inhabitants carried away captive, desolation must have reigned around and the site would soon be overgrown. In the words of the prophet, "The defenced city is solitary, an habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof," viz. the branches of the bushes with which the ruins are covered. "When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off," carried away for fuel as the next clause shows—"the women shall come and set them on fire": Isa. xxvii. 10, 11. Compare the very similar picture in chap. xxxii. 13, 14: "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: for the palace," or rather citadel, "shall be forsaken; the populous city shall be deserted: the hill," *i.e.* the fortress-mound, "and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks." The prophet is here speaking generally, of the cities of Judah rather than of Jerusalem:[2] the fate of the latter being described in the words of verse 19: "the city shall be utterly laid low." He has been telling of the havoc wrought on the country side, of the loss of "the pleasant fields" and of "the fruitful vine." Then he goes on to tell the fate of the larger fortified cities, as well as of the smaller fortresses and isolated towers.[3] They will be deserted and become the lairs of wild animals: "dens for ever." But no sooner has he uttered this dread "for ever" than he hastens to qualify it with an "until": "until the spirit be poured upon us from on high." There is hope, then, that the fenced cities will yet rise

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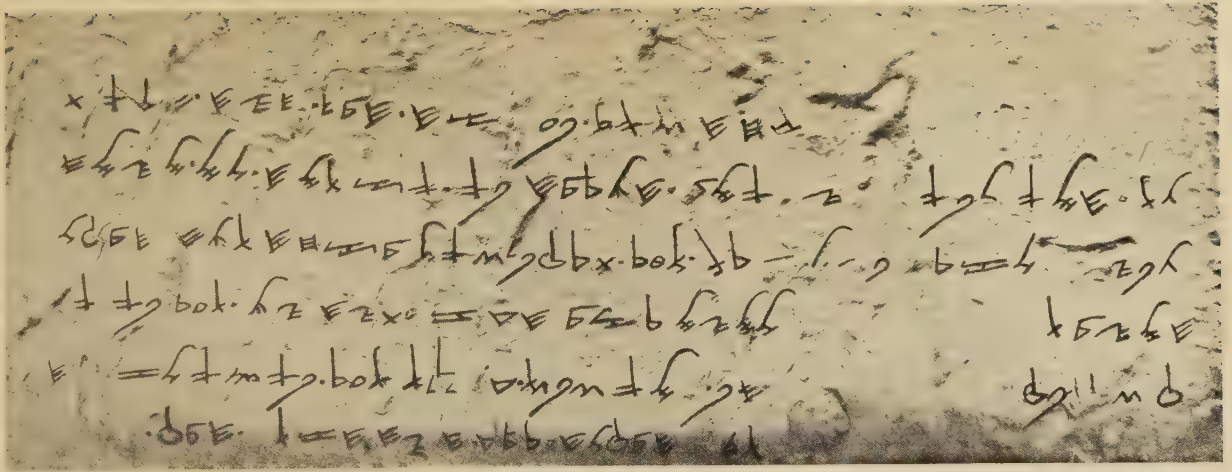
[1] Isa. vi. 11–12.

[2] This is indicated by the absence in the original of the Definite Article before the words translated "joyous city," "palace," "populous city," "hill," and "watch-tower." If the Ophel or fortress-mound at Jerusalem had been intended by the word translated "hill" we should have expected the Definite Article to appear in the Hebrew, as in Neh. iii. 26, 27, xi. 21, and 2 Chron. xxvii. 3.

[3] The words "the hill and the watch-tower shall be for dens for ever" are rendered in the LXX, "*villages* shall be caves for ever."



THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION (PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND, QUARTERLY STATEMENT, OCT. 1894).

TEXT OF THE INSCRIPTION IN ORDINARY HEBREW CHARACTERS.

(1) [זה נ]קבה וזה היה דבר הנקבה בעוד ....[על]ו
(2) הגרזן אש אל רעו ובעוד שלש אמ[ה] להת........
קל אש ק
(3) רא אל רעו כי הית זדה בצר מימן.........ובימה
(4) נקבה הכו החצב[ן] אש לקרת רעו גרזן על גרזן וילכ[ו]
(5) המים מן המוצא אל הברכה במא[ת]י[ם] . . . אלף אמה ונ
(6) ת אמה היה גבה הצר על ראש החצב..........

facing p. 217.

up again when the crisis is over; that "God will save Zion, and build the cities of Judah."[1] This, as we know from the Book of Jeremiah, was actually the case.[2] Even Lachish was to arise from her ashes and put up a valiant resistance to the arms of Nebuchadnezzar.[3] Dire, then, though the visitation, and awful the crisis, through which in about a year's time[4] the thoughtless, reckless nation will be called to pass, yet Jehovah will not forsake His people. They are yet to "abide in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places,"[5] and the time will come of which the Psalmist sings,

> "Let mount Zion be glad,
> Let the daughter of Judah rejoice,
> Because of thy judgments."[6]

NOTE ON THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION

The Siloam Inscription, belonging to the age of Hezekiah and therefore to the Isaianic period, seems to deserve an additional note. It was found in 1880 by a lad wading up the rock channel which brings the waters from the Virgin's Fountain[7] to the Pool of Siloam. Falling into the water, the boy noticed on rising to the surface what seemed like letters on the rocky wall of the conduit and told his master about it. The inscription is written in the ancient Hebrew characters from which our own capital letters are derived, and the type of character employed indicates the age in which it was written. The language is pure Hebrew. We are indebted to Prof. Sayce for the following translation: ["This is] the excavation! Now this is the history of the excavation. While the excavators were still lifting up the pick, each toward his neighbour, and while there were yet three cubits to [excavate, there was heard] the voice of one man calling to his neighbour, for there was an excess (?) in the rock on the right hand [and on the left.] And after that on the day of excavating the excavators had struck pick against pick, one against another, the water flowed from the spring to the pool for a distance of 1,200 cubits. And [part] of a cubit was the height of the rock over the head of the excavators." The conduit itself helps to explain the meaning of the inscription. It does not run in a straight line but has two culs-de-sac, which shows that the excavators began at both ends, intending to meet. This they were not quite able to do, but heard one another through the rock. The length of the tunnel is 1,708 feet and its height varies from 16 to 2 feet. A wonderful work surely for the engineers of those days!

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[1] Ps. lxix. 35.
[2] Jer. iv. 5, viii. 14.
[3] *Ibid.* xxxiv. 7.
[4] Isa. xxxii. 10.
[5] *Ibid.* verse 18.
[6] Ps. xlviii. 11.
[7] Gihon *i.e.*, "spring" was the ancient name of the Virgin's Fountain, being the only natural spring at Jerusalem.

LIST OF THE FENCED CITIES OF JUDAH

Jer., Jerusalem. Sheph., Shephelah or lowland of Judah: Jos. xv. 33.

1. Jericho, town of “fragrance,” *Erīha,* in the Jordan valley, 18 m. W.N.W. from Jer.
2. Geba, “hill,” *Jeba,* 6 m. N.E. of Jer., on N. border of kingdom, 2 Kings xxiii. 8.
3. Beeroth, “wells,” either *el-Bīreh* 9 m. N. of Jer. or *Khurbet el-Lattatin,* 1½ m. N.W. of Gibeon.
4. Gibeon, “hill-town,” *el-Jīb* 5 m. N. of Jer., at the head of the pass of Beth-horon.
5. Upper Beth-horon, “house of caves,” *Bēt ‘Ur el-fōka,* 6 m. W. of Gibeon.
6. Lower Beth-horon, *Bēt ‘Ur et-tahta,* 2 m. W.N.W. of the former and 700 ft. below it.
7. Mizpah, in Heb. always with the article, “the look-out point,” *Neby Samwīl,* 4½ m. N. of Jer., nearly 3,000 ft. above sea-level.
8. Chephirah, in Heb, with article, “the village,” *Kafīreh,* 4 m. W. of Mizpah.
9. Kiriath-jearim, “city of woods,” *Kiryat el-‘Enab,* 8 m. W.N.W. of Jer. on the road to Jaffa.
10. Eltekeh, near Timnath and Ekron in the Sheph., site unknown.
11. Ajalon, “deer”-field, *Yâlo* 14 m. N.W. of Jer.
12. Gezer, “portion,” *Tell ej-Jezer* 19 m. W.N.W. of Jer.
13. Ekron, *‘Akir* 6 m. W. of Gezer.
14. Gimzo, “sycamore,” *Jimzu* in the Sheph. 3 m. S.E. of Lydda.
15. Beth-Dagon, “house of Dagon,” *Bet-Dejan* 5 m. N.W. of Lydda and 5 m. S.E. of Joppa.
16. Azor (Assyrian *Asuru*) *Yazur* 3 m. S.E. of Joppa.
17. Bene-berak (Ass. *Banaïbarka*) *Ibn Ibrak* 5 m. E.S.E. of Joppa.
18. Japho or Joppa (Joshua xix. 46) “beautiful” (Ass. *Jappu*) *Yafa,* the well-known port of S. Palestine.
19. Zorah, *Sar‘a* 14 m. W. of Jerusalem in the Sheph.
20. Beth-Shemesh, “house of the Sun,” *Ain Sheme,* 1¾ m. S.S.W. of Zorah.
21. Timnath or Timnah, “portion,” *Tibneh,* 2 m. W. of Beth-Shemesh.
22. Jarmuth, *Tell Yarmuk,* 3½ m. S.S.E. of Timnath.
23. Soco or Socoh, “brushwood,” *Khurbet es-Suweikeh,* 2 m. S. of Jarmuth.
24. Azekah, “enclosure,” near Soco (1 Sam. xvii. 1).
25. Makkedah, “sheep-town” (?), in the Sheph. near Azekah (Joshua x. 10).
26. Adullam, “refuge,” *’Id-el-mâ,* in the Sheph. 3 m. S.E. of Soco.
27. Libnah, “white,” probably in the neighbourhood of *Bet Jibrin.*
28. Mareshah, probably *Merash,* 1 m. S. of *Bēt-Jibrīn.*
29. Ashkelon, *Ashkalân,* on the coast 12 m. N. of Gaza.
30. Eglon, *Tell ’Ajlân,* 2 m. N. of Lachish.

31. Lachish, *Tell el-Hesy*, in the Sheph. 33 m. S.W. of Jer. and 16 m. E. of Gaza.
32. Gath, " wine-press," probably *Tell es-Sâfi*, 18 m. E.N.E. from Ashkelon and 12 m. S.E. from Ashdod.
33. Ziklag, *Zuheilīkah*, 11 m. E.S.E. from Gaza.
34. Gedēroth, " walls," in the Sheph., site unknown.
35. Keilah, *Kīla*, 7 m. E. of Bet-jibrin and 8 m. N.W. of Hebron, 1,500 ft. above the sea.
36. Beth-zur, " rock-house " or " house of the Rock " (=God) *Bēt-sur* 4½ m. N. of Hebron.
37. Adoraim, " with double walls," 5 m. W. by S. of Hebron.
38. Hebron, " league " as centre of a confederacy, *el-Halîl* (=" the Friend " *i.e.* of God, cf. 2 Chron. xx. 7), 18 m. S. of Jer.
39. Ziph, *Tell Zif*, 4 m. S.E. of Hebron.
40. Debir, " shrine," formerly called Kirjath Sēpher " scribe-town," near Hebron (Jud. i. 10, 11).
41. Geder, " wall," site unknown.
42. Hormah, " devoted " viz. to destruction, so called in commemoration of a signal victory (Num. xxi 3), formerly called Zephath " watch-tower."
43. Arad, *Tell Arad*, 17 m. S. of Hebron on the S. border of Judah.
44. Tekoa, " trumpet-blast," (Jer. vi. 1), *Tekū'a* 6 m. S. of Bethlehem.
45. Etam, " bird of prey," *'Ain 'Atan*, 2 m. S.S.W. of Bethlehem.
46. Bethlehem, " house of bread," *Bēt Lahm*, 5 m. S. of Jer.

CHAPTER XIX

THE JOYOUS CITY AND THE HUMBLED CITY

"Zion shall be redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteousness."—ISA. i. 27.

OUR last chapter was devoted to the Fenced Cities of Judah. We are now to look at a vision shown to the prophet while the attack on those cities was still going on.

The twenty-second chapter of Isaiah, verses 1 to 14, has long been a sore puzzle to the commentators. All are agreed that it refers, at any rate in part, to Jerusalem; and this is true with respect to the passage taken as a whole. Verses 5 to 8*a*, however, are spoken, not of Jerusalem, but of the cities of Judah. For though the day of Sennacherib's invasion was "a day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity," yet there was no "breaking down of the walls" of Jerusalem such as is described in verse 5, no assault on the city or preparation to storm the gate corresponding to the last clause of verse 7. Had the wall of Jerusalem been broken down, the town would at once have been taken; whereas it is clear from verses 8*b*–11 that the city has not been taken or even assaulted, but merely fortified afresh so as to be able to stand a siege. To overcome these difficulties some commentators look upon verses 1–8*a* as a sympathetic outburst of sorrow over the fall of Samaria, the prophet realising that the Two Tribes and the Ten Tribes are after all one people; whilst only the latter part of the passage, verses 8*b*–14, is regarded as addressed to Jerusalem. These point out that the words "thy choicest valleys," verse 7, tally admirably with the poetic description of Samaria in chap. xxviii. 1, 4 as "the fading flower on the head of the fat valley [A.V. 'valleys'] of them that are overcome with wine"; that the interrogatory "What aileth thee now?" is a sympathetic address to the sister-kingdom; and that the prophet's wail of sorrow is due to a twofold cause, first, to his sympathy with the Ten Tribes, and secondly, to his anxiety as to the fate of Judah. For in the fall of Samaria he sees the removal of the only barrier between the mighty and ever-increasing empire of Assyria and the little kingdom of Judah. This they look upon as the explanation of the words, " he took away the covering of Judah." But to these comments it must be replied that the city and people addressed are one and the same throughout this passage. There is no sign whatever that two cities are successively addressed, first Samaria and then Jerusalem. The " thee " and the " thou " of verse 1 are the same as the " thou " of verse 8, afterwards exchanged for " ye " in verses 9–11. Again, the opening words, " What aileth thee now ? "—literally " *What to thee now ?* "—are not words of sympathetic pity, but of disgust and stern reproof. Compare the very similar words addressed to Shebna in verse 16, " What doest thou here ? " literally " *What to thee here ?* " whilst the prophet's rebuke of most unseasonable rejoicings, at the beginning of the prophecy, verses 1 and 2, is reiterated at its close, verses 12 and 13. Let us see, therefore, whether we cannot find another interpretation of the passage, which shall not only explain the severe tone of the prophecy and the circumstances of the situation as described in it, but shall also fit in with the course of Sennacherib's invasion so far as we are able to trace it.

To begin then : " The valley of vision," *Gē' Chizzâyōn*, which gives its title to this prophecy, is a name for Jerusalem, or rather for that part of Jerusalem in which the prophets lived, " The Seers' Quarter." Compare 1 Chron. iv. 14, " The Valley of the Craftsmen," *Gē' Chărâshîm*, the name of a village near Joppa where the craftsmen lived. Perhaps it is even the name of Isaiah's own house. In 2 Kings iv. 12 Elisha's servant, Gehazi, bears a very similar name ; which may indicate, either that he came from the Seers' Quarter at Jerusalem, or that he was in the service of Elisha whose house was called by the same name as Isaiah's. In this case it would answer, shall we say, to our Rectory, or Vicarage, or Manse.

The prophecy, as we have seen, opens with a note of stern reproof : " What aileth thee now ? " What cause is there for this boisterous mirth, this uproarious rejoicing ? Our army—so I understand the prophet to say—has suffered a most disastrous defeat in the field—call it rather a flight—without even striking a blow : " thy slain are not slain with the sword, neither are they dead in battle." Their very death was a disgrace ; they were cut down in the pursuit. " All thy rulers," or rather " commanders," [1] who ought to have led on their men, " fled away together, they were bound," taken prisoners, " without the bow " (R.V.M.), for they had thrown away their bows to expedite their flight. " All that were found of thee," all who were not slain, " were bound together," *en masse*, as " they fled afar off." Poor reason, then, was there for Jerusalem's tumultuous joy! To the prophet the situation of affairs, coupled with the senseless, godless mirth going on all around him, evidently caused the deepest anguish. He tells his fellow-countrymen that he sees nothing to rejoice over. Not only has the army suffered a disgraceful reverse, but "the spoiling of the daughter of my people" is still going on: the country is falling ever more and more into the hands of the spoiler. And yet there must have been some reason for the rejoicings that were going on at Jerusalem: some gleam of light, however transient, must have pierced the dark war-cloud which hung over Judah. Can we discover in the very fragmentary story that is left us of the progress of the invasion how that gleam arose? I think we can.

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[1] Cf. Joshua x. 24, where the same word is rendered " chiefs."

In the first place, then, a strong light on the disgrace which appears to have overtaken Hezekiah's forces is shed by a passage in Sennacherib's inscription on the Cylinder. Speaking of Hezekiah the Assyrian remarks, "The Arabs and his trusty warriors, whom he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem his royal city, deserted," lit. "took leave."[1] Putting this statement side by side with the passage at which we have just been looking, it appears that the deserters were either overtaken by the enemy or cut down in their flight. No more shameful disaster can well be imagined. Probably it was this loss of the flower of his army which induced Hezekiah to send that message to Sennacherib at Lachish, "I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest upon me will I bear."[2] Sennacherib appeared to receive this message favourably, and to be willing to come to an agreement, for he returned answer that Hezekiah must pay him three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. When the messengers brought back this answer they were probably accompanied by certain Assyrian officials, who came to see that the tribute was paid in full, and at the same time quietly to reconnoitre the defences of Jerusalem. These great men, standing outside the walls, were viewed, we may suppose, with a feeling of trepidation by the townsfolk, who could not understand what they said but could watch them superintending the weighing of the tribute. More particularly, they noted with some anxiety the movements of a solitary figure, apparently engaged in taking observations and writing down notes as to the defences of the city. All this may be gleaned from Isa. xxxiii. 18, where the prophet depicts his fellow-townsmen as looking back when the danger was over to those days of terror and saying to themselves, "Where is he that counted, where is he that weighed the tribute? where is he that counted the towers ? " and then adds, " Thou shalt not see the fierce people, a people of a deep speech that thou canst not perceive ; of a strange tongue that thou canst not understand."

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, col. iii. 31–33.

[2] 2 Kings xviii. 14.

When the Assyrian officials, apparently satisfied, set out on their return to Lachish, the Jewish tribute-bearers, called in chap. xxxiii. 7 " the ambassadors of peace," no doubt went with them, in order to present the tribute and at the same time to pay homage to the Great King. The tribute was a heavy one : only raised by stripping the temple doors of their costly covering [1] ; and it included other precious things beside the money payment, as well as the king's daughters.[2] Nevertheless, it was a wonderful relief to the townspeople when the cavalcade bearing it disappeared out of sight, for they felt that the danger was over, at any rate for the time, and indulged the hope that the Assyrian would now go on his way to Egypt and leave them alone. Regardless, therefore, of the disgrace which had befallen the national arms, and of the forced sacrilege committed against Jehovah's temple ; regardless also of the sufferings of their fellow countrymen in the other fenced cities, and thinking only of their own safety, they gave themselves up to feasting and revelry and to a carnival of wild excitement. In all this Isaiah, the true patriot, could not join them. To him the crisis appeared to call for fasting rather than feasting. He deeply realised the sacrilege that had been committed by despoiling the treasures of Jehovah's temple ; he grieved over the fact that Jerusalem was in no penitent frame of mind ; and he realised that the siege of Lachish was still going on. Indeed, it would seem that in " the Valley of Vision " Jehovah had revealed to him in a vision the fall of that fortress and possibly of other fenced cities, such as Libnah. " Look away from me," he cries, " I will weep bitterly ; labour not to comfort me, for the spoiling of the daughter of my people. For it is a day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity "—*mĕhūmâh ū-mĕbhūsâh ū-mĕbhūkâh*—a triple sonorous alliteration—" from the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, in the Valley of Vision." While Jerusalem had gone mad in her godless, selfish mirth, Isaiah was beholding in vision the terrible scenes that were going on in Judah. He could hear the " breaking down of the walls "—Heb. *mĕqarqar kir*, conveying the sound of the crash of masonry beneath the strokes of the ram—accompanied by loud cries of despair and shouts of victory, echoed back by the neighbouring hills. He could see Judah's " choicest valleys," not the little valleys round Jerusalem, which are hardly worthy of that description, but the more well-watered valleys running down to the sea from the

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[1] 2 Kings xviii. 16.

[2] Taylor Cylinder, col. iii. 38.

Judean hills [1]—he could see those valleys filled with the chariotry and cavalry of the foe. He could see that same scene which we may still see on the Lachish bas-relief—Elam's famous archers,[2] drawn up in column and on bended knee, each attended by a shield-bearer from Kir, aiming their deadly missiles at the defenders of the doomed fortress. He could see, too, an unmistakable sign that the fortress was about to fall: the horsemen making ready to storm the gate. And what did this vision mean to him? It meant that the siege of Jerusalem would very soon begin, inasmuch as all obstacles were so quickly being removed.

It is this thought, then, which must guide us to the right interpretation of the opening clause of verse 8, "and he took away the covering of Judah." This clause should be joined to the preceding context, and after "Judah" we must put a full stop; for the prophet is now about to turn away from his vision in order that he may reprove the godless, materialistic spirit of his fellow-townsmen. He tells them how "in that day"—"the day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity," which had been going on in Judah—they had been careful enough to look to the House of the Forest (the armoury built by Solomon, see 1 Kings vii. 2 and x. 17): they had repaired the breaches of the wall, and had attended to the water supply—they had looked to all these things, but they had not looked to Him who had brought their troubles upon them, who foresees and orders all. And now, when their God was calling them "to weeping and to mourning," and to all the other outward signs of genuine inward sorrow and true repentance, behold this sensual, selfish spirit; this godless, faithless spirit; this spirit of distrust and despair mingled with utter recklessness, which led them, while full of guilty fear and inward misgivings, to get all they could out of the present moment, and, shutting their eyes to the near future, to live according to the Epicurean motto, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." In His wrath at their behaviour, Jehovah, so he tells them, has revealed to him that He will take them at their word; it shall be with them as they say: "Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts." Was there, then, no pardon for these mad revellers? None whatever, so long as they remained in their present mood.

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[1] Such as the Vale of Ajalon, Joshua x. 12, which takes its rise near "the great waters that are in Gibeon," Jer. xli. 12; the valley of Sorek, "the Wady of choice vines," as its name signifies, Judges xvi. 4; the Vale of Elah, famed for its beauty, 1 Sam. xvii. 2; and the no less beautiful Vale of Hebron, Gen. xxxvii. 14.

[2] See the Note at the end of this chapter.

There is reason, however, for thinking that soon after this a rapid change passed over the feelings of the populace at Jerusalem. The prophet's strong utterance may well have led them to pause in the midst of their wild, godless mirth, but there were other things besides which helped to bring them to their senses. For in a few days' time the Jewish tribute-bearers returned from Lachish, uttering cries of lamentation and weeping bitterly. So loud was their lament that it was heard before they entered the town. What did it all mean? It meant that they were the bearers of woeful tidings: Sennacherib was not going to keep his word. He was not content with the payment of the tribute: he now demanded the surrender of the city; and if his demands were not complied with, he threatened to lay siege to it. This may be gathered from Isa. xxxiii. 7, 8. "Behold," cried the prophet, "their valiant ones cry without: the ambassadors of peace"—whose carrying forth the prescribed tribute was to have cemented peace—"weep bitterly. The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth"; our country is desolate and deserted. "He"—"the treacherous dealer"—"hath broken the covenant," broken his plighted word: "he hath despised the cities": our strong fenced cities are no hindrance to him. "He derideth every stronghold; for he heapeth up dust and taketh it."[1] "He regardeth not man." What cares he for the loss of human life? It is nothing to him!

Very shortly after this the Assyrian's threat was seen to be on its way to become a fact, when the Tartan, or commander-in-chief, accompanied by two other high officers, appeared with "a great army"[2] before the walls of the city to reiterate his master's demands, and endeavoured by a display of force as well as by the threats and promises of his spokesman the Rabshakeh, to induce the townspeople to surrender. This, to their credit be it said, they refused to do. No reply was made to the Assyrian's demand, for "the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not." The Rabshaketh, therefore, returned to Lachish to report to Sennacherib, leaving the Tartan to invest the city; the intention being to starve the town into surrender now that threats and promises had alike failed.[3] It was possibly about this time, when the people of Jerusalem had come to a better mind, when their sky seemed to be darkening around them, though matters had not yet reached the worst, that Isaiah uttered the following prophecy, in which he so strikingly depicts the deep humiliation that was at hand and the startling suddenness of the coming Deliverance.[4]

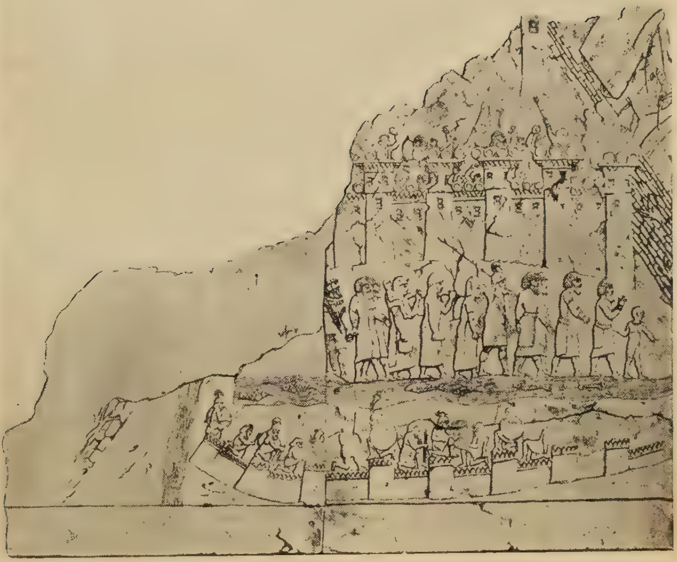
[1] Hab. i. 10. [2] Isa. xxxvi. 2. [3] Isa. xxxvi. 12. [4] Isa. xxix. 1-8.

"Ah! Ariel, Ariel!"—*Hearth of God! Hearth of God!* for such is the probable signification of the name—"the city where David encamped"—encamped in order to take it—"add ye year to year; let the feasts come round: then will I distress Ariel." That is, let the three great feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, come round in due course, let the current Sacred Year draw to its close in early autumn, our mid-September, and then the pinch will come. Jehovah will "distress Ariel, and there shall be mourning and lamentation," or, the better to preserve the assonance of the original, "moaning and mourning," "and she shall be unto me as Ariel," as *the Hearth of God, the Altar-hearth, the place of sacrifice.* But this she has long been, so that something more must be intended here than mere animal sacrifices. And what is intended we may gather from the language used in a later chapter, viz. chap. xxxiv. 6, where it is said, "Jehovah hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom." The intended sacrifice, then, is a sacrifice of men; and it becomes an anxious question, Who are to be the victims of this great sacrifice at Jerusalem? And at first it would seem that Jehovah's chosen people are to be sacrificed because of their sins. For just as David encamped against Ariel, then the strong fortress of the Jebusites, and successfully accomplished its capture, so Jehovah is now about to encamp against this same city, and who can doubt but that He will take it? So then our prophecy continues:

> "I will encamp against thee like an encircling siege-wall,
> And I will beleaguer thee with a rampart,
> And I will erect against thee fortifications."

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem," writes the Psalmist, "so Jehovah is round about his people": round about them as a protecting rampart. But here the sense appears to be just the opposite, for three times over comes in the preposition "against"; since the second clause, rendered literally, reads "I will bind a rampart against thee."

It is, then, no friendly rampart that is to be thrown around Ariel. The Holy City, so it seems, is to become the Altar-hearth of Jehovah, and its inhabitants are to be the victims. Such must certainly have been the feelings of many of the populace of Jerusalem when this part of the prophecy came to be fulfilled; when they saw the dreaded Assyrian sit down before their city, and, erecting a wall of circumvallation, prepare to starve her out. For that this was the course actually adopted we know from Sennacherib's own words on the Taylor Cylinder, col. iii. 20, "himself (Hezekiah) like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem his



A WALL OF CIRCUMVALLATION.

facing p. 226.

royal city: I placed bulwarks round about against him. The one coming out of his city gate I turned back to his misery," viz. to slow death by famine. With so terrible a fate before them how great must have been the depression of the inhabitants of the beleaguered city! How strong a contrast does Jerusalem now present to the joyous city of only a short time ago! Then, she was all boisterous noisy mirth: so boisterous, so noisy, that the prophet's stern reproof could hardly make itself heard. Now, all is changed. Jerusalem is brought so low that she can only speak in a whisper, as the prophecy goes on to tell:

" And low from the ground shalt thou speak,
And deep from the dust shall thy utterance come,
And like a necromancer *speaking* from the ground shall be thy voice,
And from the dust shall thy utterance twitter."

The figure here used is indeed alarming, for it is connected with the world of the departed, and with rites the recourse to which was strictly forbidden to Israel. And yet if that low whispering voice be the sign of a really humbled spirit, of a spirit which has heard the still small voice of an awakened conscience, and is ready to say to the great King of kings what Hezekiah said in a somewhat different sense to the king of Assyria, " I have offended: return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear," then the low-spoken prayer will sound loud in the ears of the Almighty, and will call forth an answer of peace. " O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while and the indignation "—called forth by Judah's impenitence—" shall be accomplished " upon her true repentance, " and mine anger shall be to their destruction," viz. the destruction of the Assyrians.[1] Such was the promise contained in an earlier prediction, and we find it repeated in those terrible days of the siege, when the people, conscience-stricken and humbled by the hardships of famine, were ready to cry for mercy and to implore Divine assistance. " O people that dwellest in Zion at Jerusalem, thou shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will answer thee." [2] In this prophecy concerning Ariel with what suddenness does the answer of peace break in. For the first verse had ended with the seeming threat, " she," viz. Jerusalem, " shall be to me as Ariel," as the Hearth of God: and then in the verses which followed it seemed only too clear that the people of Jerusalem were to be the victims, and that when

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[1] Isa. x. 24, 25, R.V.M.

[2] Isa. xxx. 19, R.V.M.

Sennacherib threw his army round the city, he would be merely acting as the instrument of Jehovah, who was sending forth his armies to destroy that city.[1] But now with a suddenness, only paralleled by the suddenness of the Great Deliverance when it actually came, the night of gloom passes away, and Jehovah is seen to be on the side of His people. Their voice has ascended to Him out of the dust, and that word " dust " shall lead the way to the bright promise which breaks in on the scene. For the prophet continues, " But the multitude of thy foes shall be like small dust "—a different word indeed, signifying dust in motion, yet probably suggested by the former—" and the multitude of the terrible ones as chaff that passeth away : yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly." Ariel will indeed be visited of Jehovah of hosts, yet not in wrath but in saving might, and the storm will burst in full violence, not on her, but on " the multitude," the *tumultuous throng* [2] " of all the nations that fight against her and her stronghold." " She shall be visited of Jehovah of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise "—the underground rumble of the earthquake [3]—" with whirlwind and tempest,[4] and the flame of a devouring fire," here spoken of the lightning as in Exod. ix. 23. Compare the very similar description in verses 30, 31 of the following chapter : " And Jehovah shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and the flame of a devouring fire, with a blast, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of Jehovah shall the Assyrian be broken in pieces, which smote with the rod." In these two passages all the powers of the Lord, all the forces of Nature, are introduced ; but the actual instrument to be employed is unmentioned, is purposely kept back.

How suddenly now has all the " terror "[5] passed away like some bad dream ! " The multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel," cries the prophet, " even all that fight against her and her stronghold, and that distress her, shall be as a dream, a vision of the night," a vision that vanishes before the light of day ; so complete is the overthrow, so sudden the deliverance.

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[1] Cf. Matt. xxii. 7.

[2] Such is the force of the Hebrew word thrice repeated in vv. 5, 7, 8.

[3] Cf. Ps. civ. 7, where as here the underground thunders are meant.

[4] In Palestine whirlwind and tempest have been known to be sometimes fatal to human life. See the account given by Dr. Thomson of a December storm, first seen over the marsh of the Huleh, which swept westward over the plain of Ijon, cost ten men their lives, and destroyed eighty-five head of cattle. *The Land and the Book*, p. 224.

[5] Isa. xxxiii. 18.

But if Jerusalem is like one who has had a bad dream and awakes to find it gone, her proud foe has also had his dream: a delusive dream, the dream of a Tantalus. He was thirsting for the spoil, thirsting still more for revenge, and making quite sure of speedily getting his thirst appeased, when, just as he was about to grasp the tempting fruit, it was snatched from him. "It shall be," cries the prophet, "as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty; or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion." They shall be disillusioned, as it were, in their own destruction. For the Hearth of God, set on fire from Heaven, shall consume its victims, and thus forcibly shall it be shown that Jehovah has His "fire in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem."[1]

NOTE 1

"Elam bare the quiver."—ISA. xxii. 6.

Both in Isa. xxii. 6 and in Jer. xlix. 35 the bow appears as the national weapon of Elam. In the former passage we read "Elam bare the quiver," and in the latter Jehovah says "I will break the bow of Elam." These words find abundant illustration in the Assyrian monuments. Thus in that famous battle-piece, the battle of Tulliz, which occupies so large a space in the Kouyunjik Gallery of the British Museum, the devotion of Elam to her national weapon stands out very prominently in the death-scene of her king, Tep Humban.[2] Wounded by a hostile javelin, Tep Humban falls on his knees. Over him stands his son Tammaritu with drawn bow. Heedless of the Assyrian spearmen right in front of him, the father points his son to a renegade Elamite prince, another Tammaritu, who has gone over to the side of the enemy and is seen standing a little behind the spearmen with his bow drawn against his namesake. Thus the two Elamite princes stand opposed, each armed with the national weapon, each with his bow drawn to the full. The inscription written above runs thus: "Tep Humban in despair has said to his son 'Draw the bow.'" In the battle of Tulliz the bow is the principal weapon in the hands of both the Elamites and the Assyrians, but we notice this difference: that whereas the former scarcely wield any other weapon, not a few of the Assyrians are seen to be armed with the spear. Further, it will be observed that as the dead and dying are all Elamites, so the numerous bows and quivers with which the ground is strewn are intended to form an evidence of the signal victory won by Assyria over Elam. In the next bas-relief to that which depicts the battle of Tulliz we have presented to us the installation of Humbanigash, a nominee of the Assyrians, as king of Elam; and it will be noticed that the majority of the Elamites, who advance to do homage to their new king, carry bows on their left arms and quivers on their backs, some quivers only. Again, among the captives taken by him in his eighth campaign, directed against Elam, Ashurbanipal mentions "the Captain of the Bowmen." This was probably the highest post in the Elamite army, since it was held by Tep Humban before he became king.[1] A little further in the same inscription Ashurbanipal speaks of the bowmen and crossbowmen whom he has brought from Elam and added to the royal portion. Further, when writing to his faithful "reporters" in the Secret Service about a grandson of Merodachbaladan who was proving traitor to Assyria, he uses these words: "he has collected his archers in Elam."[2] Lastly, in the Assyrian Basement at the Museum is a bas-relief styled "Capture of a city of Susiana by Ashurbanipal," the upper division of which represents a besieged city whose towers are crowded with bowmen; whilst in the lower, where the spoil is being brought before the Great King, an Assyrian soldier is seen carrying four bow-cases, two on each arm: and a little behind is another soldier carrying four bows. In the same room in a relief entitled "Babylonian War, fortresses and march of the troops," are several men, some on foot, some riding in low carts drawn by mules, who in dress and headgear are an exact counterpart of the Elamites in the battle of Tulliz. These are all armed with the bow, and no doubt represent men of the Elamite contingent sent to help the Babylonian king in his war against his brother the king of Assyria.

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[1] It has been much disputed whether *Ariel* should be rendered "Hearth of God" or "Lion of God." The above words from Isa. xxxi. 9, no less than the whole tone of the prophecy at which we have been looking, are strongly in favour of the former rendering, which has the support of the Targum, most Jewish, and most modern commentators. Two very similar words, found in Ezek. xliii. 15, are rendered respectively "upper altar" and "altar hearth" in the R.V.

[2] The name was formerly read Teumman.

NOTE 2

On "the covering of Judah."—Isa. xxii. 8.

It is interesting to find that the view of Isa. xxii. 5–8 advocated in this chapter, viz. that the fenced cities formed the "covering," or veil which screened Judah, or with which Judah screened Jerusalem, was held by some of the older commentators. Matthew Pole, in his famous *Synopsis Criticorum*, published in 1669, gives as one interpretation of the words, "the covering of Judah," the following: "the bulwarks of Judah, by which Judah was hidden as by a veil," and as his authorities refers in the margin to Piscator, professor of theology in the University of Herborn, the learned Grotius (1583–1645), and the theologian Glassius (1593–1656). Again, when writing on Hos. viii. 14, "Judah hath multiplied fenced cities," he makes the following comment on the authority of Grotius: "The Two Tribes, seeing the incursions of the Assyrians under Pul, Tiglathpileser, and Shalmaneser into the territory of the Ten Tribes, diligently fortified their cities, without troubling to obtain peace from God.—Isa. xxii. 8." The Scripture reference, which concludes the above extract, is decisive as to the opinion entertained by Grotius.

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[1] Olmstead, *History of Assyria*, p. 435.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 451.

CHAPTER XX

THE RUMBLINGS OF THE STORM

"Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty."—Isa. ii. 10.

IN the prophecy respecting Ariel at which we have been looking we seem to hear one of the loudest thunder-claps sent to give warning of the coming storm. The first half of the Book of Isaiah contains many such warnings, and I propose to make them the subject of this chapter, in order that I may show how several points of detail which they furnish, meeting in due time with an exact fulfilment, help to confirm the inspiration of this marvellous Book.

We may then begin with Isa. i. 7, 8, uttered at a time when Judah was still rejoicing in that bright sunshine of prosperity, wealth, and abundance, which crowned the closing years of the long reign of Uzziah. Even then, as that chapter shows, the rumblings of the storm were distinctly audible to the prophet's ear. The temple courts were, indeed, thronged with worshippers, the temple sacrifices were plentifully supplied with victims, and yet Isaiah could hear the storm in the distance. How is this to be explained? Some will answer that in the corrupt state of society, which he there depicts with a master hand, the prophet saw and realised the certainty of the coming judgment. That may very well have been the case. But how did he come to know that when the desolating flood of invasion swept over the land Zion would be left: "left" indeed "as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers," but still "left"? Only by a revelation from heaven could Isaiah have known this.

"A day of Jehovah of hosts" is, then, most certainly coming, and the prophet tells us in chap. ii. how the storm will descend "upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up," and describes the great terror that will fall upon men as they flee to find a hiding place. Nothing can exceed the vividness of the picture which he draws: "men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of the

Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth."

Such, then, is the warning given in the opening chapters of this Book; but it is not till we get to the fifth chapter that the instrument of judgment comes into view. The prophet has been pronouncing six woes on the upper classes of society because of their inordinate land-greed, the drunkenness and dissipation which characterise their feasts, their blatant infidelity, their confounding of good and evil, the self-satisfied astuteness of the statesmen, and the dissoluteness of the corrupt magistracy, and he goes on to tell how all this will come to an end in Jehovah's fiery indignation. Already, we are told, the anger of Jehovah has been kindled against His people, and His hand stretched forth against them, in consequence of which there has been great loss of life, the dead bodies lying unburied in the streets. This may have been realised in the attack made on Judah by Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel at the close of the reign of Jotham and in the early days of Ahaz,[1] since the prophet adds, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

With the above asseveration, so often repeated in a later chapter, the vision of an avenging host is brought before us in verses 25 to 30. First, the invading army comes "from far," "from the end of the earth"; comes at Jehovah's "hiss," at the summons of the Almighty, since—to quote the Burden of Babylon —"Jehovah of hosts" it is who "mustereth the host for the battle." Its advance is rapid—"they shall come with speed swiftly"—for Assyria under the Sargonids is "a fiery flying serpent."[2] The "nations which compose it are perfect in physique, in military ardour, in equipment, and in drill." "None shall be weary or stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint,[3] and their wheels like a whirlwind." Study the Assyrian bas-reliefs and you will realise the truthfulness of this description of the Unnamed Foe. See with what energy and ardour the Assyrians pursue the deadly game of war. Examine on the Gates of Balâwât, and in the bas-reliefs of Sargon and Sennacherib, the systematic way in which everything is done: the arrangement of their camps, the march of their armies, the disposition of their forces when storming a town, as, for instance, at the siege of Lachish. Look at the different dress worn by each division of the army; some being very lightly clad, others wearing long coats of mail reaching down to the feet. Turn to the cavalry and chariotry: note their proud bearing, their martial élan. Say, is not this the military nation, the Germany of antiquity? When all those bows are bent, those war-horses prancing, those wheels going round like a whirlwind, how great must have been the terror they inspired! Is it this terror which Isaiah likens to that caused by the lion's roar. Could any simile be more telling? The lion is the king of beasts, strong, irresistible, terrific, and bent on securing his prey; which, when he has once seized, who can take it from him? Could any figure more fitly portray this great military power? Is it not that which the Assyrians have themselves chosen? What else can be the meaning of that ferocious animal from the entrance to the temple of the War-god at Nimrûd, now in the Nimrûd Central Saloon at the British Museum? Does not Sennacherib begin his famous description of the great battle at Khalulē with the words, "Like a lion I raged"? Does he not delight to tell us of the terror inspired by his arms? Thus, after Khalulē, when his march was directed towards the east, we are told how "fear and terror were poured out over Elam." Again, when writing of Hezekiah, he says, "the terrifying splendour of my majesty overcame him"; also, when speaking of Shuzub the Chaldean, "the terror of my battle overcame him." How truthful, then, is the prophet's grand picture of the invading army! Only one detail more is wanted to complete it. What is the country like when the invasion has swept over it? To picture this, if only by way of suggestion, the prophet must exchange the roar of the lion for the roar of the sea, since this fresh figure carries with it the idea of desolation. Compare Scott's beautiful lines, when, describing the withdrawal of the victorious English army from the field of Flodden, he tells us how

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[1] 2 Kings xv. 37 and 2 Chron. xxviii. 5.

[2] Isa. xiv. 29.

[3] *I.e.* hard as flint: the shoeing of horses being unknown in antiquity.

"from the charge they drew,
As mountain waves from wasted lands
Sweep back to ocean blue."

Indeed, the Assyrian himself makes use of this same simile. Thus, Tiglathpileser I overwhelms the land of Mildish "like the flood of the deluge,"[1] while Sennacherib, somewhat varying the figure, "sweeps over the whole of a wide land like a hurricane."[2] So then, cries the prophet, "they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and distress, and the light is darkened in the clouds thereof." A scene of hopeless misery, with the deepest gloom, spreads all around!

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[1] *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. i, 98.

[2] Taylor Cyl. ii. 11.

The next rumble of the approaching storm tells us distinctly the quarter from which it may be expected. It occurs in a passage already dwelt upon in Chapter IV, viz. Isaiah's words addressed to Ahaz.[1] The invader is now plainly named as the king of Assyria. The Assyrian in his wars is before all things an invader. He does not wait to be attacked. He protects, and at the same time enriches himself, by attacking others. Military raids, developing into wars of conquest, are essential for the maintenance and growth of his empire. Hence the prophet Micah, understanding quite well Assyria's usual course of action, thus addresses that power when meditating the invasion of Judah: " Now shalt thou gather thyself in invading bands, thou daughter of invasions," and then, glancing forward at the siege of Jerusalem, adds, " he hath laid siege against us." [2] But though the invader acts on his own initiation, he is in reality an agent in the hands of Jehovah, and is therefore described as summoned by the " hiss " of Jehovah, just as in the prophecy at which we have been looking.[3] But what puzzles us in the present passage is the fact that we find Egypt summoned as well as Assyria. This requires a word of explanation. Both these kingdoms are to invade Judah with armies many as the flies of Egypt and as the bees of Assyria. Egypt indeed, as the event shows, will come as a helper; but since, as a later oracle declares, she " will help in vain and to no purpose,[4] her very help must prove hurtful, for her mighty host cannot but impoverish the districts through which it marches. As swarms of stinging flies are a terrible scourge through their very numbers, so the Egyptian host, drawn from " the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt," *i.e.* from the far-away confines of the Egypto-Ethiopian Empire, the very paradise of flies about the head-waters of the Nile,[5] will certainly, as the prophet's words indicate, cause great distress in Judah. This will be understood when we realise that the Egyptian army, described by Sennacherib as " a force without number," had to march a considerable distance through the land of Judah before they reached Eltekeh, where they were defeated by the Assyrians. So then, if Judah was to be denuded and put to shame by that " hired razor," the king of Assyria, her condition could only be rendered still more deplorable by the march through her territory of the Egyptian host which came to help her.

In chap. viii. 1–8 a fourth thunder-clap is heard toward the

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[1] Isa. vii. 17–20.

[2] Mic. v. 1. In justification of the above translation note that the word rendered " troops " in the R.V. means marauding bands; cf. 1 Sam. xxx. 8, 15, 23, 2 Kings vi. 23, xiii. 20, and xxiv. 2.

[3] Cf. Isa. vii. 18 and v. 26. [4] Isa. xxx. 7. [5] See Chapter XIII, p. 127.

North. The prophet, having declared that "the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria" will very soon "be carried away before the king of Assyria," goes on to tell how the invasion, which he likens to "the waters of the River," *i.e.* the Euphrates, will roll onwards into Judah, and all but submerge that little kingdom: "he shall sweep onward into Judah: he shall overflow and pass through; he shall reach even to the neck," *i.e.* Judah will only be able to keep her head above water. What is that head? Clearly Jerusalem, the metropolis, "the city of the Great King." That city, as already foretold in chap. i. 8, will alone escape.

We have now reached a point at which the prophecies concerning the coming storm begin to wear a different and less alarming aspect. Henceforth the fury of the storm is seen to descend eventually on the Assyrian himself. We note this first in Isa. x. 5–27, a prophecy belonging to the reign of Sargon (722–705 B.C.), since Samaria is described as having fallen as well as Damascus: see verse 9. Also, Carchemish, Hamath, and Arpad, mentioned in the same verse, were all conquered by Sargon: the two last in 720 for a second time, and Carchemish in 717. No state now stands between the Assyrian Empire and the kingdom of Judah, and, as pointed out in Chapter XI, it is but a few short miles from the Assyrian frontier to Jerusalem. Further, we are led by the tone of this prophecy to think that Judah is now growing restive under the yoke—see verses 20 and 27—and that the king of Assyria, being aware of her disaffection, is seriously purposing her conquest: see verse 11. Unfortunately we cannot tell whether Hezekiah is yet on the throne, for we do not know the date of his accession. But it may very well be that he has succeeded Ahaz, and that we are in the earlier years of his reign when his successes against the Philistines may have encouraged him to think of breaking away from Assyria.

It is, then, at this fresh crisis that the prophecies of the coming storm began to turn into prophecies of deliverance: and, surely, it is no wonder that the sky should somewhat brighten at the coming of this godly monarch. If this be so, we are warranted in giving an ironical turn to the Hebrew interjection with which the prophecy opens: "Ha! Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation!" How vividly do these words call up before the mind's eye that statue of Ashurnatsirpal in the Nimrûd Gallery of the British Museum—said to be the only perfect Assyrian royal statue in the round—which represents the Assyrian king holding in his left hand a short knobbed truncheon, the symbol of his power. This royal truncheon in the prophecy now before us is regarded as a figure of the Assyrian himself. He is the rod of Jehovah's anger: his delegated authority is, so to say, an embodiment of the Divine indignation "against a profane nation, against the people of my wrath." All unknown to himself, he has a charge from the Almighty "to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." Dark, indeed, are these ominous words. But now, as it were, beyond the heavy lowering cloud a dim light appears. The Assyrian is not a conscious instrument. His aim is not to bring about the Divine purpose, but merely to extend his conquests and add to his spoils; and at this game he has been hitherto so successful that he thinks none can withstand him. Why should not Jerusalem fall before his arms, just as other states have fallen. Look at what he has done; see how he has removed the bounds of the conquered peoples, and robbed them of their treasures just as easily as one robs a deserted bird's nest. How amply do the inscriptions and bas-reliefs reflect these boasts! Many are the pictures given us of the spoiling of conquered peoples, and often are we told by Tiglathpileser and Sargon of boundaries altered and native rulers replaced by Assyrian prefects.[1] How well, too, does the boast of Sargon that the great gods have set him "over the whole of the power of renowned princes" serve to illustrate the words, "Are not my princes all of them kings?" Whilst Sennacherib, if not so boastful as some of his royal predecessors, yet hesitates not to inform posterity that he is "the wise leader,"[2] "the prudent shepherd, the perfect hero, the manly warrior, the first of all princes, the mighty one who consumes the unsubmissive."[3] What is this but to say, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent"?

It is, then, this pride of the Assyrian which is to lead the way to a brighter outlook: for "when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem" He means to "punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks"; since, in magnifying himself and telling with what ease he has conquered "the kingdoms of the idols,"[4] he has been led on to threaten that he will do the same with Jerusalem and her idols. It is true that there were many idols in Judah, at least in the days of Ahaz,[5] but Judah's rightful Lord cannot be thus spoken of. This " rod " shall not be allowed thus to magnify itself against the Hand that wields it. " Therefore," adds the prophet, " shall the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness ; and under his glory there shall be kindled a burning like the burning of a fire. And the Light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame : and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day. And he shall consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field, both soul and body "—both the vital powers and the bodily frame [1]—" and it shall be as when a sick man pineth away.[2] And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them." The destruction of the Assyrian is here likened to a fat healthy person becoming sick and wasting away ; with which is joined the figure of a forest fire which leaves only a few bare trunks standing. In mentioning the destruction of both forest and fruitful field, or garden-land, the prophet is thinking possibly of the havoc wrought by the Assyrian in his warlike raids, *e.g.* in the gardens round Damascus, in the Lebanon forest, and among the palm groves of Babylonia. Sargon, in the long and altogether unique account of his Eighth Campaign, again and again tells how he cut down and burnt the forests, groves, cane-brakes, and vines in Ararat and the neighbouring countries. Indeed, it seems to have been an established rule in Assyrian warfare to destroy all that could not be carried away. As then the Assyrians have treated other nations, so shall it be meted out to them in return.

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[1] Cf. the Tablet Inscription of Tiglathpileser, lines 10, 14, 36, 43, and the Khorsabad Inscription of Sargon, lines 32, 44, 58, 59, 62, etc.

[2] Nebi Yunas Inscription, col. ii. 5.

[3] Taylor Cylinder, col. i. 3, 6–8.

[4] Or "not-gods." "Isaiah seems to have chosen, or coined, a special word, *elîlîm*, for the dethroned idol-gods: as if he would say, They are not *êlîm* "strong ones," but *elîlîm* "nonentities." (Cheyne.)

[5] Isa. ii. 8.

The above assurance of the judgment coming on Assyria is followed by a promise that a remnant of Israel will escape—the same promise that was first proclaimed in the name given by Isaiah to his eldest son, Shear-jashub—and it is added that this escaped remnant shall no more stay themselves on Assyria, as Ahaz did, but shall stay themselves on Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. Then the statement is emphasised that the escaped ones, who shall turn to the Mighty God, will be only a remnant : a prediction historically verified, seeing that vast multitudes were carried away captive by Tiglathpileser and Sennacherib, not to mention those who perished in the war.[3] Terrible days, then, are ahead. " For though," cries the prophet, " thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *only* a remnant of them shall return : a consumption *is* determined, overflowing with righteousness. For a consummation, and that determined, shall the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, make in the midst of all the land." [4] " Consumption " and " consummation," representing two closely allied words in the original, are very alarming terms, for they express the thoroughness with which Jehovah will execute His righteous judgments. Nevertheless, in what follows we find a very tender message of love for the returned remnant. Jehovah addresses them as " my people that dwellest in Zion," and bids them not to be afraid of the Assyrian. He will indeed smite them " after the manner of Egypt," *i.e.* as Pharaoh did of old. But " yet a very little while " and the " indignation "—a word pointing back to the opening verse of the prophecy—will be consummated, the chastisement will come to an end ; and then the Divine anger " shall be to their destruction," *i.e.* to the destruction of the Assyrian. For Jehovah has a scourge, or whip, in store for him ; and an overthrow, similar to that which happened to the Egyptian army at the Exodus, or to the vast host of the Midianites in the days of Gideon, is about to take place. The Assyrian has lifted up his " rod " against the people of Jehovah, " after the manner of Egypt." Jehovah will do the same. He, too, will lift up *His* rod and it shall be " *after the manner of Egypt*," *i.e.* as it was long ago lifted up by Moses over the Red Sea to open the way for Israel's deliverance and the destruction of their foes. Then, in that day of deliverance, " his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing " : literally " because of the oil," *i.e.* in virtue of the consecration of David's royal line, out of which the Messiah was to spring. Compare Ps. lxxxix. 20, 22, 23 :

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[1] So Kay in the *Speaker's Commentary*.

[2] R.V.M.

[3] See Chapters III and VIII.

[4] R.V.M.

> " I have found David my servant ;
> With my holy oil have I anointed him :
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> . . . . . .
>
> The enemy shall not exact upon him ;
> Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
> And I will beat down his adversaries before him,
> And smite them that hate him."

That such was the interpretation put upon Isaiah's words by the old Jewish commentators we know from the Targum paraphrase, which runs thus : " the nations shall be broken before the Messiah," *i.e.* before the Anointed One. Further, since the " yoke " and " burden " put upon Assyrian vassals consisted in those heavy annual tributes, so often alluded to in the inscriptions, the words of the Psalmist, " the enemy shall not exact upon him," seem peculiarly appropriate. Lastly, note that the words " rod," " staff," " burden," " shoulder," and " yoke," which occur in these closing verses of the prophecy, as well as the reference to the overthrow of Midian, all form so many links with Isa. ix. 4. The prediction of the fall of the Assyrian forest at the close of this chapter has already been dealt with.

Our next prophecy, Isa. xiv. 24–27, emphasises the fixed purpose of Jehovah as ensuring the certainty of the coming overthrow, and marks out the scene of its accomplishment. "Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders." These last words, be it noted, are almost identical with those found in chap. x. 27. It is then added that Jehovah's far-reaching purpose, carried out by His strong hand, will seriously affect "all the nations"; as indeed it did, for it put back the conquest of Egypt by Assyria for at least a generation, and this must have affected in some measure all the peoples of the West. Finally, the inevitable certainty of the coming catastrophe is again emphasised in the words, "For Jehovah of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?"

We turn next to the powerful word-picture of the coming storm given in chap. xvii. 12–14. The uproar and tumult of Assyria's vast, composite host of "many peoples" is likened to "the roaring of the seas" and to "the rushing of mighty waters": a favourite simile, as we have already seen, with the Assyrians themselves. The waters rush onwards, but the unnamed Power arrests them: they are driven back and scattered. No longer now like the mighty flood, the foe resemble rather the chaff of the mountain threshing-floor carried away by the wind, or the whirling dust borne along by the storm. Very vividly, but with astonishing brevity does the prophet describe the sudden disaster which is to bring about this great change: "At eventide behold terror; *and* before the morning they are not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us." Note the amazing assurance of this utterance. It is as if the seer had been permitted to behold in vision that night of terror which he so confidently predicts.

The overthrow of the Assyrian forms the main subject of the prophecy addressed to Ethiopia in chap. xviii, and Jerusalem's deep humiliation and her sudden and mysterious deliverance form the burden of the prophecy concerning Ariel in chap. xxix. As we have already studied these passages we turn next to the grand theophany contained in chap. xxx. 27–33, in which the natural phenomena of an approaching storm are used in an anthropomorphic description of the wrath of Jehovah. "Behold," cries the prophet, "the name of Jehovah," *i.e.* the manifestation of His power, "cometh from far"; like a storm rising in the distance and seen by the observer some time before its arrival. Or, again, the words may mean that the invader himself comes "from far," even "from the end of the earth."[1] The next clause, rendered literally, runs thus: "burning is his anger, and a heaviness the uplifting." It describes the apparent difficulty with which the threatening storm-cloud seems to lift itself clear of the horizon.[2] Then, as the storm draws nearer, the description is continued thus: "his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is as a devouring fire." The lips full of indignation are portrayed by the roar of the thunder; the tongue like a devouring fire, by the forked lightning. Close upon these terrors of the storm follows the tropical downpour, turning the brooks into raging torrents scarcely fordable. This feature is described in the words, "his breath is as an overflowing stream that reacheth even unto the neck." In these words we seem to see a gracious indication, like that given in chap. viii. 8, that Judah will not be suffered to go under. Indeed, the storm that in the first instance seemed to be about to overwhelm her, is now seen to descend on the nations that have come to attack her. Jehovah's intention in sending it is explained by a fresh figure. He means to "swing the nations with the sieve of vanity," *i.e.* to agitate, scatter, and bring to nought the besieging hosts. This is what actually happened to that part of Sennacherib's army which was engaged in besieging Jerusalem. To the remaining portion, which was led by the king himself, we may refer the words which follow: "a bridle, which leadeth astray," astray that is from the object sought, "shall be upon the jaws of the peoples." Compare Jehovah's words addressed to Sennacherib, "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."[3] While such is to be the portion of the invader, joy, bursting forth into sacred song and festal music, is heard in Zion, as on the night when some religious feast, Passover or Tabernacles, is being kept; or as when a pilgrim-train, marching to the strains of the flute, ascends the Holy Mountain, to worship Jehovah, Israel's everlasting Rock. This is indeed a bright gleam of returning sunshine. But the prophet's gaze is again attracted by the grandeur of the storm which is descending on the foe, as he tells us how Jehovah will cause His glorious voice to be heard in the roll of the thunder, and will show the lighting down of His arm in the lightning flash, followed by a cloud-burst, rain-storm, and hailstones. These are the manifestation of His anger; for "through the voice of Jehovah shall the Assyrian be panic-stricken, which smote with the rod." Yes! the smiter, whom Jehovah employed as the weapon of His indignation, shall now be smitten himself! "And every stroke of the appointed staff, which Jehovah shall lay upon him, shall be with tabrets and harps"—shall be accompanied with the rejoicings of His own people—"and in battles of brandishing will he fight with them." This last expression finds its parallel in chap. xix. 16, where it is said that Egypt "shall tremble and fear because of the brandishing of the hand of Jehovah of hosts, which he brandisheth over it." The picture is one of a terrified foe, lying prostrate and at the mercy of his antagonist. This, then, will certainly be the fate of the Assyrian, "for," in the Divine counsels, "Topheth"—the place of burning, for such is the probable meaning of the word—"is prepared of old; yea, even it," even that hateful place of idolatrous human sacrifice, "is made ready for the king": not Moloch, not the king of Assyria, but—as the Chaldee Targum explains—the Divine King. In this passage the emphasis lies on the words "even it," and the meaning is that Jehovah, having got all things ready, means to use even Topheth for a vast holocaust, and that already the breath of Jehovah, *i.e.* His bursting indignation, like a stream of brimstone is kindling it. It appears, then, that the destruction of the Assyrian host will take place in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, for Topheth is the name of a place in the valley of Hinnom on the south side of the Holy City.[1] Also since the words are added, "he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood," we gather that it will take place on a very vast scale.

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[1] Isa. v. 26.

[2] Cambridge Bible *in loco.*

[3] Isa. xxxvii. 29.

As the passage at which we have just been looking strongly emphasises Jehovah's wrath against the Assyrian, so in the chapter which follows, viz. Isa. xxxi. we have brought before us a striking picture of Jehovah's love for His own. The chapter begins with an ironical address to those who were trusting in a human arm rather than in the Divine. "Ah! they that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses; and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah! Yet He also is wise"—the words are spoken in bitter irony—He is wise as well as they. Yes! wiser far, and quite as determined. He "will not call back his words," but will translate them into action. He will arise against the evil doers—the godless, worldly-wise statesmen—and those whose help they have sought. For what are these much-thought-of Egyptian troops? Only men, and not God: flesh, and not spirit. So then, when Jehovah's mighty hand is stretched out against them, both helpers and holpen must needs fall together; for Jehovah single-handed is a match for all His foes. This great truth the prophet sets forth under a strikingly Homeric simile [1] as follows: "For thus saith Jehovah unto me, Like as when the lion growleth and the young lion over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, he will not be dismayed at their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall Jehovah of hosts come down to fight upon mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof": *i.e.* Jehovah counts Jerusalem His own and He is not going to have it taken from Him by any foes, however numerous and however powerful. Shalmaneser III of Assyria, having once upon a time captured a certain city on the Middle Euphrates, gave it the quaint name "I-have-taken-not-yours." [2] So in this prophecy Jehovah seems to say to the Assyrian concerning Zion, "I have taken: not yours." But because of this strong affection of Jehovah for His own, the prophet is now compelled to employ a fresh simile. As against the Assyrian, Jehovah is the lion; but in His dealings with His own people, He is the parent bird defending its young. "As birds flying, so will Jehovah of hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver *it*, he will pass over and preserve *it*." In this last clause there is a comforting reference to the Exodus from Egypt. Israel, despite their sins and provocations, are again to be "passed over." But in order that this may be, they must hearken to the prophet's solemn call to repentance: "Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted," or rather "have made deep revolt"; in allusion to the secret alliance with Egypt, made by "them that seek deep"—the same verb—"to hide their counsel from Jehovah": chap. xxix. 15. There is a reference also to the secret practice of idolatry, as the succeeding context shows. But when Israel, schooled by adversity, have once cast away their idols, "then," cries the prophet, "shall the Assyrian fall by the sword of One who is not a man, and the sword of One who is not earth-born shall devour him." But the destruction thus foretold will be only partial, for it is added, "he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall become tributary." Some, then, will escape by flight; others will be taken captive and put to forced labour. In that part of the Assyrian army which escapes will be the king and some of his chief men, as appears from the words that follow: "And his rock shall pass away by reason of terror, and his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign," *i.e.* at the standard raised up by Jehovah; in other words, by this *signal* demonstration of His power.[1] Such is "the oracle of Jehovah,"[2] "whose fire is in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem." Jerusalem, then, is to be the scene of the Great Deliverance. It is there that Jehovah will burn up His enemies, for, as stated earlier in the prophecy, Jehovah is coming down "to fight upon mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof." It is, therefore, that part of the hostile army which is encamped against Jerusalem that will be destroyed.

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[1] It was at this spot that Ahaz and Manasseh made their sons pass through the fire to Moloch: 2 Chron. xxviii. 3 and xxxiii. 6. That the name signifies "a place for burning" may be gathered from its equivalents in Aramaic and Arabic, and also from the Targum on this passage.

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[1] *Iliad*, bk. xii, 299–302 and xviii. 161–162.

[2] Monolith Inscription, col. ii. 35.

The only other predictions concerning the coming overthrow at which we have still to look will be found in chap. xxxiii. The opening verse of that chapter, which the Masoretic editors of the Old Testament have placed in a section by itself, foretells the downfall of Assyria. The prophet, deeply moved by what he sees going on all around him, declares that there will be a limit set to Assyria's treachery, violence, and robbery; and that a day is coming when the tables will be turned, and the spoiler himself be spoiled. In the Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea, uttered some ten years later than this prophecy, viz. about 691 B.C., in which the same description is given of the Assyrian, a mysterious revelation is made to the seer as to two of the three great powers that will be called on to bring about that great catastrophe.[3] Here the event is predicted, but no statement is made as to the agents to be employed. As we cannot expect the royal scribes of Assyria to give us any account of military reverses, still less can we expect them to tell the tragic story of the downfall of the empire. But where the monuments of Assyria fail us, records from Babylonia come to our help. Reference has already been made to the tablet known as B.M. 21,901, discovered by Mr. C. J. Gadd of the British Museum.[4] That tablet is written in the Neo-Babylonian type of cuneiform, showing that it comes to us from a Babylonian source. The part that relates to the fall of Nineveh, though partially obliterated, is yet a complete voucher for the fulfilment of this prophecy as to the spoiling of the Assyrian. It appears that a "mighty assault was made upon Nineveh in the summer of 612 B.C., and that a great slaughter of the chief men, including apparently the king himself, took place." Then it is added, "the spoil of the city, a quantity beyond counting, they plundered." It is this spoiling of the great spoiler which the prophet Nahum so eagerly anticipates: "Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is none end of the store, the glory of all precious things." [1]

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[1] Note that the passing away of Assyria's rock and his princes brings on the scene in the verses which follow, chap. xxxii. 1, 2, the Messianic King and His princes: the King who will be to His weary war-worn subjects "as the shadow of a great rock"—the same word—"in a weary land."

[2] The literal rendering of the well-known words "saith the Lord."

[3] See Chapter XV.

[4] See *The Fall of Nineveh*, by C. J. Gadd, M.A.

The spoiling of Nineveh, however, is still in the far future; but there is another spoiling of the foe much nearer at hand, although at present there are no indications of it whatever. For Judah's strength is proving perfect weakness, her fenced cities are everywhere falling, and even the garrison of Jerusalem has deserted. It is under these circumstances that the prophet utters the touching prayer of verse 2, in which, like one greatly agitated, he turns from prayer to intercession, and then back again to prayer: "O Jehovah, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble." No sooner have these words escaped his lips than his spirit is cheered by a vision of the coming overthrow. That vast well-ordered host, which compasses the city round about, is seen to be thrown into the greatest confusion by the convulsions which attend the manifestation of Jehovah: "At the sounding thunder nations flee, at thy rising peoples are scattered.[2] And your spoil shall be gathered as the caterpillar gathereth, as locusts leap shall they leap upon it." The scattering of the foe is here attributed to a thunder-clap, literally "a sounding voice," viz. the voice of the Almighty. Compare chap. xxx. 30: "Jehovah will cause his glorious voice to be heard," also Ps. lxxvi. 9: "Thou didst cause sentence to be heard from heaven." The description is figurative. What is meant is that the foe will be startled and put to flight by a sudden and alarming Divine interposition, and will hasten away terror-struck. Compare chap. xxxi. 9. If we confine the vision to the force around Jerusalem, we must then believe that some of them found safety in flight. But very possibly the words have a wider meaning and foretell the hasty departure of the invader and the quantity of spoil that he was forced to leave behind.

Having foretold the scattering of the foe, the prophet goes on to tell the blessed results of Jehovah's timely interposition. First, the supremacy of the God of Israel is seen to be thereby established. "Jehovah is exalted; for he dwelleth on high": controlling all, Himself beyond the reach of all earthly powers. Secondly, by the severe chastisement of His own people, ending in so marvellous a deliverance, "he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness." He has brought about that blessed change foretold by the prophet in his early days, " Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness."[1] There is, therefore, some hope for the future, and the prophet, addressing the godly monarch, whose kingdom has all but been wiped out, adds, " And there shall be stability in thy times, abundance of salvation, wisdom and knowledge: the fear of the Lord is his treasure." This last clause is deserving of our notice. Though the " precious things " once shown to the ambassadors of Merodachbaladan have disappeared,[2] though " the treasures of the king's house " have been sent as tribute to the king of Assyria,[3] yet Hezekiah possesses that of which no earthly power can rob him: " the fear of the Lord is his treasure."

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[1] Nahum ii. 9.

[2] Ewald's translation.

The next section, verses 7 to 12, contains an interesting indication as to the time of its utterance, or perhaps I should rather say of its fulfilment. The envoys sent with the tribute have returned to the city, bewailing the Assyrian's breach of faith. The country is described as overrun with the foe in much the same way as in the days of Jael.[4] It is the autumn of the year, and the forlorn look of nature, stripped of her summer glories, agrees well with the ruin and desolation reigning around. " The land mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and withereth away: Sharon is like a desert; and Bashan and Carmel shake off *their leaves*." It is man's extremity, and therefore it is God's opportunity. " Now will I arise, saith Jehovah; now will I lift up myself; now will I be exalted. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble ": your plans and your performances shall all be blown to the winds. " Your breath is a fire that shall devour you ": *i.e.* your rage and fury shall recoil on yourselves. " And the peoples," which compose the vast Assyrian host, " shall be as the burnings of lime," as if burned to lime,[5] " as thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire ": nothing but their ashes shall be left to tell of what was but lately a very formidable array.

So great will be the coming overthrow that the next section, verse 13 to the end of the chapter, begins with the Almighty's call on all both far and near to acknowledge His might. For so terrible, so awe-inspiring, will be the blow that is to shatter the beleaguering host, that the prophet pictures the godless sinners in Zion as startled and crying out in dismay, " Who among us can dwell so near to a God who has shown himself a consuming fire to his foes? Who among us can dwell so near to a Being whose wrath is ever burning against the wicked?" To this cry of alarm he makes a very beautiful answer. Let them turn over a new leaf and make this great God their Friend. Let them fashion anew their lives after the model of Psalms xv. and xxiv.: then the nearness to Jehovah's earthly dwelling will be their security; and this Zion on its holy mountain, which alone has withstood the foe, shall become their impregnable fortress. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

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[1] Isa. i. 27.
[2] Isa. xxxix. 2.
[3] 2 Kings xviii. 15.
[4] Judges v. 6.
[5] Amos ii. 1.

Oh! how changed is all when Jehovah thus interposes in behalf of His people! They no longer see their king humbled in the dust by the proud foe, with his clothes rent, and clad in sackcloth.[1] Rather do they behold him attired in his royal robes, and in the state befitting a powerful ruler. For this little kingdom of Judah, which Sennacherib has sought to diminish by giving Hezekiah's cities to his own allies, has now waxed strong again, and its people are no longer cooped up within the walls of a single city. This is the prospect which the prophet now foresees as he cries to each true, loyal-hearted citizen of Zion, "thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, they shall behold a far-stretching land."

The "terror" of the invasion and siege has passed suddenly away, but it still haunts the people like some bad dream. They still keep asking themselves, "Where is he that counted, where is he that weighed the tribute? where is he that counted the towers?" But to these misgivings the prophet replies, "Thou shalt not see the fierce people, a people of a deep speech that thou canst not perceive: of a strange tongue that thou canst not understand." Then, as if to arouse them from their dreamy perplexities, he bids them "look upon Zion, the city of our festal meetings"[2]—now no longer hateful to Jehovah—and adds, "thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that removeth not"—the Rabshakeh had spoken of their deportation to a land like their own[3]—"the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. For[4] there Jehovah will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers and floods,[5] wherein shall go no galley with oars,[1] neither shall majestic ship pass thereby. For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king; he will save us." The words seem to invite a comparison of Jerusalem with the Island-Tyre, the only other city which has escaped capture at the hands of the Assyrians. Tyre's safety depended on her insular position, which gave her command of the seas through her war-vessels, her galleys with oars; while at the same time the wealth arising from her foreign commerce, carried on by her "majestic ships," enabled her, if necessary, to buy off the invader. But Jerusalem also is insulated, owing to the fact that she is Jehovah's chosen dwelling-place. She is engirdled with the broad waters of the Divine protection: those waters which it is impossible for her foes to cross. Perhaps it is this thought which leads the way to the figure employed in the next verse: "Thy ropes hang loose: they do not hold fast the support of their mast:[2] they do not keep the sail spread: then is the prey of a great spoil divided; even lame men share the prey." In representations of ancient ships on the walls of Egyptian temples and on the Assyrian bas-reliefs they are seen to have only a single mast. This mast was "stepped," or fixed in a hole in the keel, or in a cross-beam of the vessel, and was held firm in its place by the ropes or "tacklings." These were also used to keep the sail spread. If the tacklings were loose, the vessel, becoming unmanageable, might easily be wrecked and become a prey to the wreckers. Such is the figure here employed; but the question is, What is the power represented by this vessel in distress? Is it Jerusalem or Assyria? The older commentators for the most part answer, Assyria: the modern answer, Jerusalem. In favour of this latter view Delitzsch and Cheyne point to the feminine pronominal suffix in the Hebrew word, translated in the R.V. "thy tacklings," as belonging to a land or city, not to a people. But it has escaped them that in Ezek. xxxii. 18, 22, 24, 26, 29 the different countries and nationalities mentioned are all feminine. Besides which it is possible that the suffix refers to the ship, not to what the ship stands for. This, then, does not help us to decide the matter. A better guide will be found in the meaning of the Hebrew particle *az* translated "then." Are we to understand *az* as meaning "in consequence of the existing state of things," or "in spite of the existing state of things?" In other words, Does *az* mean "then"? or does it mean "even

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[1] Isa. xxxvii. 1.

[2] The same word is translated in chap. i. 14, "appointed feasts."

[3] Isa. xxxvi. 17.

[4] The compound particle here used has generally the sense of "but": in this instance it is better rendered "for" as in Job xlii. 8. In Prov. xxiii. 18 it is rendered "for surely."

[5] The word here used is borrowed from the Egyptian and signifies a great body of water. In Scripture it is almost invariably used of the Nile.

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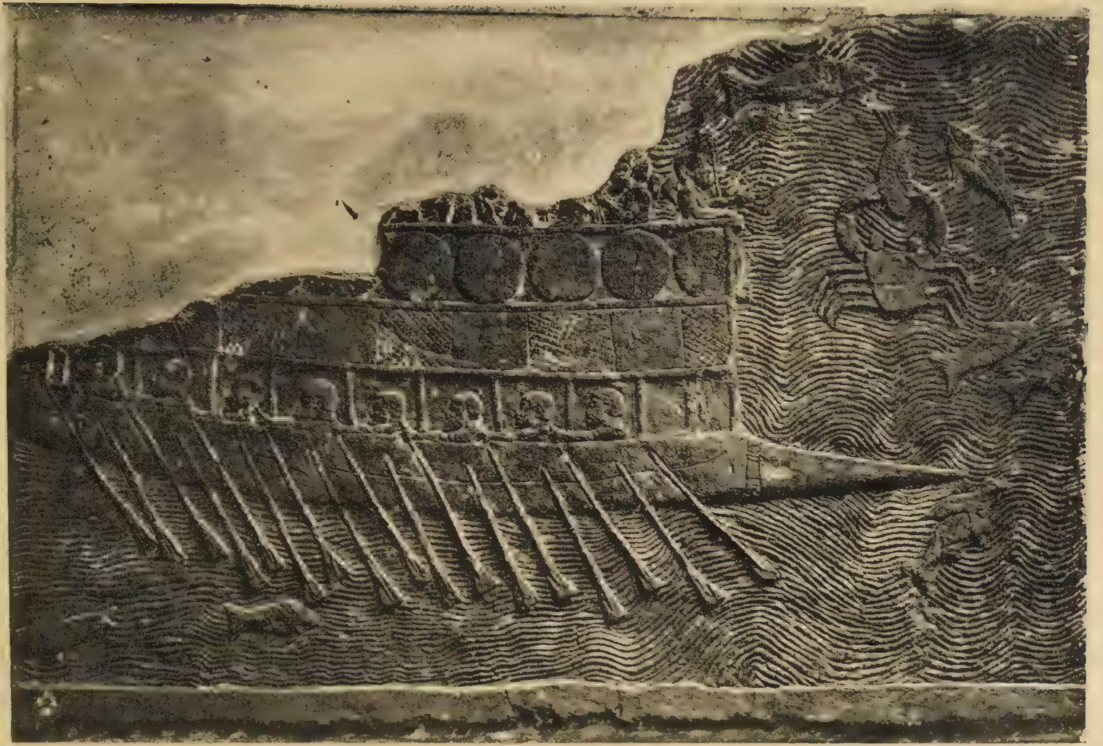
[1] Note the addition "with oars." This shows that a war-galley is intended, in which everything depends on speed, whether the object be to elude pursuit, or to ram the ships of the foe.

[2] Compare Delitzsch's translation.



A WAR GALLEY.

facing p. 248.

then"? A comparison with the use of *az* in other passages will serve to show that the particle means simply "then," and that the shipwrecked vessel must therefore represent Assyria. This is the view of the Targum, which paraphrases thus: "At that time the people shall be bereft of their strength, and shall be like a ship, whose ropes are broken; neither shall there be strength in their mast, which is cut down, so that it is not possible to spread a sail upon it; then shall the house of Israel divide the treasures of the people, the abundance of spoil and prey." A further argument may be adduced from the analogy of Scripture. Thus in Ps. xlviii. 7 the foe is likened to the ships of Tarshish which Jehovah breaks with the east wind; whilst Ezekiel in chap. xxvii. 26–32 describes the fall of Tyre under the figure of a foundering ship. When, immediately after using this figure, and in the same sentence, the prophet goes on to speak of "the prey of a great spoil" being "divided," it seems lawful to suppose that the figure is continued, that he views the vessel as a wreck and sees the wreckers at their work. So great is, then, the wreckage with which the beach is strewn, that even the lame man arrives in time to have some share in it.

We have thus arrived at the closing verse of the prophecy, which may be rendered thus: "And not an inhabitant," *i.e.* of the redeemed Zion, "will say, I am weak: the people that dwell therein have their sins forgiven." This verse must not be detached from the previous context. The connection is probably as follows: the prophet has spoken of lameness, of even the lame man being in time to gather some of the spoil. But in the regenerate Zion there will be no lameness, no sickness or weakness of any kind; for with the forgiveness of sins comes revival, spirit, alacrity, and courage. In the words of Delitzsch, "The strength of Israel, and all its salvation, rest upon the forgiveness of its sins. It will thus be seen that the prophecy ends on the same note with which it began, viz. the spoiling of the Assyrian."

In bringing this long chapter to a close let me briefly sum up the different predictive elements contained in the prophecies at which we have been looking. Isaiah predicts the advent of terrible days; days such as have not been known in Judah since she became a separate kingdom.[1] Jehovah is about to chastise His rebellious children, and He means to employ Assyria as His instrument.[2] Egypt will come to the help of Judah; but this will only make matters worse, since both Egyptian and Assyrian armies will be quartered in the land.[1] The whole country will be subjugated by the Assyrians with the exception of the capital city, Jerusalem.[2] That city alone will not go under; for "Jehovah hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge." [3] Jerusalem will be invested by the Assyrians, but not assaulted.[4] At the critical moment, when things are looking desperate, Jehovah will descend to fight on mount Zion.[5] The blow delivered by Him against the besieging force will be sharp and sudden and attended with great loss of life.[6] It will be delivered in the night, and before the morning all will be over.[7] The actual agency to be employed is not revealed, but metaphors taken from natural phenomena are used to describe it.[8] The impression conveyed is that it will be to some extent of a supernatural character, even though natural agency should be employed.[9] In any case it will be acknowledged by the surrounding nations as Jehovah's doing.[10] The result of this great catastrophe will be a complete and speedy deliverance from the horrors of war and from the Assyrian yoke.[11] That part of the Assyrian army round Jerusalem having been for the most part smitten, the rest of the invading army under their king will leave the country in terror.[12] Then Judah despite her deep humiliation and seemingly hopeless plight, will regain her freedom as well as her place among the nations.[13] Finally, it will be noticed that in these predictions the central point is the mysterious Deliverance of Jerusalem by the manifest interposition of Jehovah.[14]

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[1] Isa. vii. 17.

[2] Isa. x. 5.

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[1] Isa. vii. 18, 19.

[2] Isa. i. 8.

[3] Isa. xiv. 32.

[4] Isa. xxix. 3: cf. xxxvii. 33.

[5] Isa. xxxi. 4.

[6] Isa. x. 17–19, 33–34, xxxi. 8, xxxiii. 12.

[7] Isa. xvii. 14.

[8] Isa. xxix. 6, xxx. 30.

[9] Isa. xvii. 13, xxxi. 4, xxxiii. 21.

[10] Isa. xviii. 3, xxxiii. 13.

[11] Isa. x. 27, xxxiii. 20.

[12] Isa. xxxi. 9.

[13] Isa. xxxiii. 17.

[14] Isa. i. 27, iv. 5, 6, x. 24, xiv. 32, xxix. 8, xxx. 19, xxxi. 5, xxxiii. 20.

CHAPTER XXI

PREPARING FOR THE STRUGGLE

"In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not."—Isa. xxx. 15.

THE repeated predictions of the prophet Isaiah respecting the storm that was to burst over Judah because of her sins do not seem to have made much impression on those who heard them. They were, it is true, spread over a considerable period, some thirty or more years, and the prophet's later predictions were lit up with promises of a mysterious heaven-sent deliverance. Jehovah Himself was coming down to fight upon Mount Zion: the enemy would fall by no human arm. Now as it is natural to many to dwell rather on the brighter side, it is quite possible that these later predictions may have even encouraged Hezekiah to cast off the yoke of Assyria, and to seek thus to undo the mischief done by Ahaz. At what time he took this step is uncertain: but the accession of a new king was the opportunity generally chosen by subject states for breaking away from the sovereign power. In the absence, then, of any definite knowledge we may suppose Judah to have broken out into rebellion at the accession of Sennacherib in 705 B.C. This is all the more likely when we remember that at the time of the Ashdod troubles, 712–711, Sargon was aware of a certain restive spirit among the peoples of the West. "The peoples of Philistia, Judah, Edom, and Moab, dwelling beside the sea, bringing the tribute and gift of Ashur my lord" were even then "speaking seditions" and seeking an alliance with Egypt.[1] They were hatching rebellion, which broke out, we may suppose, in 705, leaving Hezekiah four more years to prepare for the struggle. In this chapter we shall look at the preparations made; in which, indeed, the prophet Isaiah took no part, and that for two reasons: first, because there was no national repentance; and secondly, because there was no trust in Jehovah, but only in human means and in alliances with earthly powers. Isaiah was a true patriot, and none felt more than he "for the spoiling of the daughter of my people";[1] but he saw around him all the evils of prosperity and the absence of any real repentance, and he knew by inspiration both the woes which were coming and also the only quarter from which deliverance either could, or would, arise. He had, therefore, little sympathy with the measures taken, and in part condemned them. But there was one measure which he would hardly be likely to condemn, viz. Hezekiah's conquest of Philistia; seeing that the Philistine cities formed part of the inheritance given to Israel and had, indeed, already been in part possessed by them.[2] By enlarging his borders, then, and endeavouring to unite Southern Palestine under one head the Jewish monarch no doubt felt that he was acting wisely and preparing for the inevitable.

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[1] See p. 115.

In 2 Kings xviii. 7, 8, Hezekiah's conquest of Philistia is placed in close conjunction with his casting off the Assyrian yoke. The Sacred Writer after stating that "Jehovah was with him; whithersoever he went forth he prospered": adds, "and he rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not. He smote the Philistines unto Gaza and the borders thereof"—*i.e.* through the entire extent of their territory—"from the tower of the watchman to the fenced city." Now the best commentary on this passage is Sennacherib's account of his own conquest of Philistia, which is given on the Taylor Cylinder immediately after the account of his conquest of Phoenicia and the homage paid to him at Ushû.[3] The record runs thus: "But Zedekiah (Tsidqâ) king of Ashkelon, who did not submit to my yoke, the gods of his father's house, himself, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his brothers, the seed of his father's house, I tore away, and I dragged him off to Assyria. Sharri-lu-dari, son of Rukibtú, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon, and I imposed on him the payment of tribute, the price of my overlordship, and he drew my yoke. In the course of my campaign Beth-Dagon, Joppa (*Yappû*), Beneberak,[4] Azur, the cities of Zedekiah, which did not quickly throw themselves at my feet, I besieged, captured, and carried off their spoil.

"The rulers, nobles, and people of Ekron (*Amqarruna*),[5] who had thrown into iron fetters and handed over to Hezekiah (*Khazaqiaū*) of the land of Judah (*Yaūda-ai*) Padi their king, a sworn vassal of Assyria—he shut him up in durance as an enemy—their heart feared. They called upon the kings of Egypt (Mutsuru), the bowmen, chariots, and horses of the king of Ethiopia (Melukhkha), a force without number, and they came to their aid.

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[1] Isa. xxii. 4.

[2] Joshua xv. 12 and Judg. i. 18.

[3] The Hosah of Joshua xix. 29.

[4] Joshua xix. 45.

[5] Joshua xv. 45.

In the vicinity of Eltekeh (Altaqû)[1] they set the battle in array against me: they appealed to their weapons. In dependence on Ashur my lord, I fought with them and accomplished their overthrow. The commander of the chariots, and the Egyptian princes, together with the commander of the chariots of the king of Ethiopia, my hands captured alive in the midst of the battle. Elteke and Timnah[2] (Tamnâ) I besieged, captured and carried off their spoil. Against Ekron I advanced. The rulers and nobles who had made rebellion I slew, and impaled their bodies on stakes round the town. The townsfolk, who were guilty of disaffection and rebellion, I took for a spoil. The rest of them, who had committed no sin and misdeed, who were faultless, I ordered to be released. Padi their king I brought forth from Jerusalem (Ursalimmu), and set him on the throne of sovereignty over them. The gift due to my overlordship I laid upon him."[3]

In studying this record on the Cylinder the first thing that strikes us is that Philistia like Phoenicia was divided. Zedekiah of Ashkelon and the rulers of Ekron are anti-Assyrian, whereas the previous context represents Mitinti of Ashdod as sending in his submission to Sennacherib at Ushû, whilst later on we are told how he and Tsil-Bel of Gaza received from Sennacherib some of the cities of Hezekiah; so that clearly they are to be regarded as pro-Assyrian. This is to be explained by the history of the previous thirty years. Hanun of Gaza was one of the Philistine princes who had joined Pekah and Rezin in attacking Judah,[4] and who in 734 sought a refuge in Egypt from the arms of Tiglath-pileser, but presently going over to the side of Assyria was reinstated in his position as king of Gaza. In 720, shortly after the usurpation of Sargon, Hanun, who had seized the opportunity to form an alliance with So king of Egypt,[5] was defeated along with his ally at Raphia on the Egyptian frontier and carried captive to Assyria, where he was chained "hand and foot with ring and bar."[6] We are not surprised, therefore, to find Gaza now under the rule of one who bears the Assyro-Babylonian name, Tsil-Bel. So too the chastisement meted out by Sargon to Ashdod in 711 joined with the fact that peoples from other parts had been planted by Sargon in Ashdod territory, must have been enough to keep that city on the side of Assyria.

The Philistines were not Semites, but a European people who came to Palestine—with which their name is for ever associated—from Caphtor, *i.e.* Crete.[7] We read of them first in the time of

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[1] Joshua xix. 44.
[2] Or Timnath, Joshua xv. 10, Judg. xiv. 1.
[3] Taylor Cylinder, ii. 69–iii. 11.
[4] 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.
[5] 2 Kings xvii. 4.
[6] Olmstead, p. 208.
[7] Amos ix. 7.

Abraham, when they are settled at Gerar in the extreme south of Palestine. In the Egyptian annals the *Pulasati* appear first in the reign of Rameses III, about 1232 B.C., when, as forming one section of the "Peoples of the Sea," they invaded Egypt in great force both by sea and by land. On the Assyrian monuments *Palastu*, "Philistia," is first mentioned by Adad-nirari III, 812–783 B.C.; but it is quite possible that the name in this instance denotes S. Palestine as in Exod. xv. 14. On the Assyrian as on the Egyptian monuments the Philistines are distinguished by their splendid physique and bold martial bearing; also more particularly by their plumed helmets encircled with a band of feathers set upright.[1] There is no doubt that they made splendid soldiers, which explains the fact of the Cherethites—whose name betrays their Cretan origin—forming part of the body-guard of king David.[2] In Joshua xiii. 2, 3 the country of the Philistines is clearly defined as extending from the Egyptian frontier as far north as Ekron. It is also there stated that they were not conquered in the days of Joshua, and mention is made of their government under five "lords"—Heb. *seranim*, a Philistine loan-word—who ruled severally the five cities, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. Of these five cities Gath, dismantled by Uzziah,[3] ceased to be the capital of a kingdom and is not mentioned along with the other four in Jer. xxv. 20, Amos i. 7, 8, Zeph. ii. 4, and Zech. ix. 5, 6. Its downfall as a seat of power is referred to in Amos vi. 2, though it was still in existence in the time of Micah.[4] Similarly in the Assyrian records Gath is not mentioned as a royal city, though we may perhaps recognise it in *Gimtu Asdudimmu* "Gath of the Ashdodites," one of the cities of Ashdod captured by Sargon in 711 B.C.

Now the Philistines being of an entirely different stock from the Semites, we should have expected that their kings would have borne Philistine names, for their language appears not to have been extinct even in the days of Nehemiah.[5] Instead of which they all bear Semitic names. We must suppose, then, that their state was something like that of modern Wales, and that they were becoming Semiticised though they had not altogether dropped their native speech. Further, not only are the names of these Philistine rulers Semitic, but some of them bear distinctively

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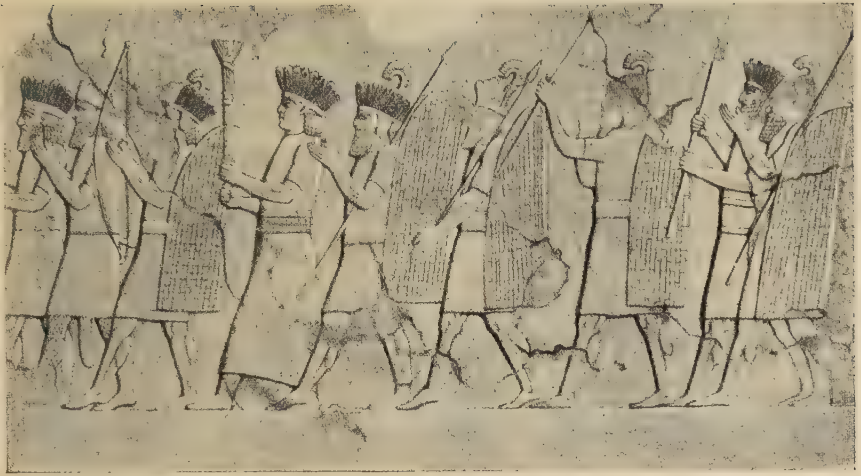
[1] Maspero: *Struggle of the Nations*, pp. 462, 463, and 699: also Olmstead, fig. 123.

[2] 2 Sam. xv. 18.

[3] 2 Chron. xxvi. 6.

[4] The words "Tell it not in Gath," Mic. i. 10, are regarded by some as a proverb, but the context, in which a number of other towns are mentioned, with a similar play upon their names in the original, does not favour this view.

[5] Neh. xiii. 24.



PHILISTINES WITH FEATHERED HEAD-DRESS.

facing p. 254.

Jewish names. Thus, while Hanun was a name in use among the Ammonites as well as among the Jews,[1] and whilst Tsil-Bel, "Shadow of Bel," is suggestive of a Babylonian origin, and Sharru-lu-dari "let the king live for ever" is a distinctively Assyrian name, Padi, according to Schrader,[2] is the Hebrew name Pedaiah "Jehovah hath ransomed,"[3] and Tsidqa is Zedekiah "Jehovah is righteous." This is most interesting, since we see in the bearers of these two last names the evidence of Hezekiah's conquests in Philistia, as recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 8. Padi and Zedekiah were no doubt sub-kings, of Jewish nationality, appointed by Hezekiah. The case of Padi is especially instructive. Appointed apparently by Hezekiah, he seems presently to have gone over to the side of the Assyrians and to have been acknowledged as an Assyrian vassal. Whereupon the Jewish king appears to have seized him and imprisoned him in Jerusalem, at the same time incorporating Ekron in his own kingdom. When Judah was over-run by the armies of Sennacherib, the Assyrian insisted on the release of Padi and his reinstatement as ruler of Ekron. We learn, further, from the record on the Cylinder that there were two parties in Ekron; one, taking the side of Assyria, the other, that of Judah. Zedekiah king of Ashkelon, whom Hezekiah appears to have put in the place of "Rukibti their former king," remained faithful to his over-lord and along with all his family was carried captive to Assyria. Possibly, by surrendering Ashkelon after the capture of his cities, he was able to escape a worse fate. After that surrender Sharru-lu-dari was placed on his father's throne as an Assyrian vassal. It is worthy of notice that the sway of Zedekiah extended over Joppa and three neighbouring cities at a considerable distance from Ashkelon and separated from it by the territory of Ashdod. These cities, indeed, lay to the north of the Philistine frontier. Hence we may infer that Hezekiah desired to place that part of the coastal region which lay within his domains under a single ruler. Equally interesting with the case of Ekron and Ashkelon is that of Ashdod. When Sargon captured that city in 711, he left it under the rule of his officials and treated it as an integral part of his empire.[4] Yet in 701, only ten years later, Ashdod is found under the rule of a king who bears the name Mitinti, which according to Schrader is also a Hebrew name, being identical with the name Mattaniah, "the gift of Jehovah."[1] Who is responsible for this change of ruler at Ashdod? Presumably Hezekiah, since the name of the new ruler marks him out as a nominee of the Jewish monarch. However, when the Assyrian came into the land, Mitinti like Padi went over to the side of the enemy, and hastened to Ushû to acknowledge himself an obedient vassal of Assyria.

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[1] 2 Sam. x. 1.

[2] *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, vol. i, 152.

[3] 2 Kings xxiii. 36. Similarly in 2 Kings xviii. 2 Abi is short for Abijah, cf. 2 Chron. xxix. 1.

[4] See Chapter XII, p. 114.

With regard to the situation of the Philistine royal cities, Gaza, standing on its hill and well supplied with water, forming as it were the gateway from Egypt into Palestine, must always have been a site of great strategic importance. Hence we find it mentioned in that ancient record, the 10th chapter of Genesis. It is also mentioned on the Amarna Tablets. The position of Gaza is no less favourable to commerce. Hence it is still the centre of a large population. Not so, however, the sites of the other Philistine cities. Ashkelon is covered with orchards; Ashdod, a group of mud hovels; Ekron, the modern *Akir*, an obscure village; whilst the site of Gath is still uncertain. Ashkelon, the modern *Usdûd*, was the only one of the five actually on the sea coast: see Jer. xlvii. 7. Its site is the reverse of that of Ashdod. Ashdod, on its high ample mound two miles inland, was protected, as Sargon tells us, by its water defences. Ashkelon, in its small amphitheatre by the sea, was engirdled with hills along whose crest ran the city wall. Its capture by Menephthah king of Egypt is recorded in that deeply interesting passage in which the name of Israel first occurs in profane literature.[2] Sir G. A. Smith writing of Ashkelon says, "The town has no material strength."[3] This may well account for its surrendering to Sennacherib without a siege. Gaza and Ashdod on the other hand were strong positions, as their names show.[4] The latter, though captured by Sargon, is credited by Herodotus with a siege of twenty-nine years by Psammetichus I of Egypt, being the longest siege known in history.[5]

The action of Hezekiah in imprisoning Padi, now a vassal of Assyria, and in dethroning Rukibti, another Assyrian vassal, shows remarkable courage and spirit. He was evidently bent on enlarging and strengthening his kingdom with a view to the struggle, which, now that he had thrown off the yoke of Assyria, he knew could not be far distant; and he appears to have thought that he could best do this by occupying territory which Jehovah had given to Israel and which Israel in former days had in part taken from the Philistines.[1] His courage appears in this: the events of the last thirty years, the campaigns of both Tiglathpileser and Sargon, had shown that Assyria was bent on the conquest of Egypt, and the Jewish monarch must have known only too well that she would most certainly take dire vengeance on any kingdom that dared to block her path, and more especially on a kingdom, which, like Judah, had so recently been her vassal. At the same time it must be acknowledged that he was encouraged to act as he did by the growing power of Ethiopia-Egypt.

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[1] Cf. 2 Kings xxiv. 17. A king of Askelon in 732, mentioned by Tiglath-pileser and whose name is partially obliterated, appears also to have borne this name.

[2] The passage runs thus: "Khati (the Hittite-land) is at peace, Canaan is a prisoner as far as the disaffected are concerned, the inhabitant of Askelon is led away, Gezer is carried into captivity, Yenoam is brought to nothing, Israel are destroyed and have no longer seed, the Horite-land (Gen. xiv. 6) is like a widow of the land of Egypt." Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. iii, p. 263.

[3] *Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 190.

[4] "Gaza," or rather "Azzah," is from a Heb. root signifying "to be strong": "Ashdod" from a root which in Arabic has a similar meaning.

[5] Hdt. ii. 157.

It will perhaps be asked, What bearing has the Burden in Isa. xiv. 28–32 on the subject that we have been studying? That Burden according to its superscription was uttered in the death-year of Ahaz (720 B.C.), and therefore shortly before the accession of Hezekiah. From the standpoint of chronological sequence it appears to occupy its right place in the Book of Isaiah, being placed shortly after the Burden of Babylon, in which is predicted the death of the great conqueror Tiglathpileser after he had risen to an unprecedented height of power and united the two thrones of Assyria and Babylon. Near the close of that Burden the conqueror's dynasty are also sentenced to destruction, apparently to speedy destruction.[2] Tiglathpileser died in 727 B.C., and his son Shalmaneser towards the close of 722. A fresh dynasty then arose, viz. that of the Sargonids, so called after their founder. Now a change of dynasty was always looked upon in the East as a good opportunity for revolt. Moreover, during the first two years of the reign of Sargon the situation was certainly very critical. Only three months after his usurpation his formidable rival, Merodachbaladan, seated himself on the throne of Babylon and entered into an alliance with the Elamites against Assyria. In the following year, 720, the Elamites and Assyrians met on the banks of the Tigris and a drawn battle was fought before Merodachbaladan had time to come up. This encouraged the Western States—Hamath Damascus, Samaria, and the Philistine Gaza—to break out into rebellion that same year. Our Burden, then, belongs to the year 720. The Philistines are rejoicing because the "rod" that smote them has been "broken." The allusion is to the downfall of the dynasty of Tiglathpileser. The "rod" that smote Philistia cannot signify Ahaz. Ahaz did not smite Philistia; but Philistia smote Ahaz.[1] Also the "smoke" of war, seen by the prophet, comes, not from Judah, but "out of the north." The Philistines, filled with a spirit of optimism because of the critical state of affairs in Assyria, are represented in the Burden as sending their "messengers" along with those from the other states to draw Judah into an alliance. The prophet warns Philistia that no such happy time is coming as she expects, but quite the reverse. "Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee," is his address to the four city-states, for Gath is no longer independent—"Rejoice not, for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent." The "serpent," as explained in our opening chapter, is Assyria. The "basilisk" and "fiery flying serpent" might be referred to Sargon and Sennacherib respectively. It is better, however, to regard these terms as parallels, just as in the following verses, where "the needy" answers to "the firstborn of the poor"; "remnant," to "root"; "city," to "gate." What the prophet evidently means is that Philistia will be no better off, but worse. For in the near future—the broad outline of which is here disclosed to him—Sargon will capture her two strongest cities, Gaza and Ashdod: Sennacherib will take Ashkelon captive, and encircle Ekron with a ghastly ring—the impaled corpses of some of her chief citizens. "Howl," then, "O gate; cry, O city; thou art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee," melted away in terror at the sight of that smoke coming out of the north, caused by the burning of Joppa and her neighbour cities, for it tells thee that a mighty host is close at hand: a host in whose ranks are no stragglers; "none standeth aloof at his appointed times." With this vision of coming disaster before his eyes, what answer shall the prophet return to "the messengers of the nations,"[2] the Philistine embassy now courting an alliance with Judah? Only one answer is possible: viz. that "Jehovah hath founded Zion," and therefore her walls are impregnable. Zion is the one, only place of safety, and "in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge." What answer is this to the Philistines? It is a suggestive answer, that they too, leaving their Dagon, Ashteroth, Derceto, and Baal-zebub, should put their trust in Jehovah. How useless! how unpractical! some will say. But surely not altogether so. The Psalmist, when telling how Jehovah's foundation is in the holy mountains, and how the

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[1] Judges i. 18.

[2] Isa. xiv. 21, 22.

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[1] 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.

[2] The word "nations" is Singular in the original, but is here used in a distributive sense, and should therefore be rendered in the Plural.

Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, speaks thus of heathen proselytes born anew in Zion: "Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this one was born there." [1]

That Hezekiah's policy with regard to Philistia succeeded, and that he was able both to strengthen and enlarge his kingdom, is borne witness to by certain passages in the inscriptions of Sennacherib. Thus in one of the Bull Inscriptions he writes, "I devastated the *wide* territory of Judah: the *strong* proud Hezekiah its king I brought in submission to my feet." Again, in the Nebí Yunas Inscription we meet with the same expression, *rapshu nagû* (*matu*) *Ya-ū-di* "the wide territory of Judah." Whilst on the Cylinder, in a passage already alluded to, he boasts of having considerably diminished Hezekiah's kingdom: "His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land and gave to Mitinti king of Ashdod, Padi king of Ekron, and Tsil-Bel king of Gaza; and I diminished his land." [2] Did this arrangement continue after the Assyrian had retired? We can hardly think so. Isaiah's prediction was "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold a far-stretching land," [3] and the Chronicler's record tells how Hezekiah "was exalted in the sight of all nations from thenceforth." [4] But whether the Jewish monarch was able to re-establish his suzerainty over Ekron and Ashkelon seems doubtful.

As the time of the great struggle drew nearer another effort was made to strengthen the position of Judah, viz. by forming an alliance with the Ethiopian-Egyptian power, the same power to which Hoshea had looked in 724 B.C., and Ashdod in 711. This effort, in which, so far as we know, Hezekiah took no part, was promoted by the princes of Judah,[5] and was undertaken probably within a year of the invasion of Sennacherib.[6] However natural such a move might be on the part of the Jewish rulers, it was met with the most determined opposition by the prophet Isaiah on the following grounds. In the first place the princes acted in the same underhand way as Ahaz when he endeavoured to conceal from the prophet his fixed purpose to call in the aid of Assyria. Their work was carried on "in the dark," and called forth the denunciation, "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD." [7] Then, being undertaken in this spirit, it was entered into and carried out quite independently of Jehovah: He was not even consulted, so that from first to last their course of action was neither more nor less than rebellion against Jehovah. "Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that weave a web," *i.e.* plait an alliance, "but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin."[1] The prophet, as in a vision, sees the Jewish princes on their way down to Egypt; for he sees all that they are so anxious to hide. So then he sees them reach Zoan, or Tanis, on the east of the Delta and on the right-hand bank of the eastern arm of the Nile. Then, after a while, he catches sight of them at Hanes, the modern *Ahnas*, a very important city to the south of Memphis, known to the Greeks as Heracleopolis Magna. Here, we may suppose, they met the Ethiopian ruler of Egypt, probably Tirhakah, the cousin of Shabataka who is now on the throne of Ethiopia,[2] and to him they offer the treasure which is to procure his alliance. But this effort, as the prophet foresees, will prove utterly futile, so that, as in the case of Ashdod,[3] they who look to Egypt for help will be put to shame. "They shall all be ashamed of a people that cannot profit them, that are not an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach."[4] This vision of the embassy to Egypt is then repeated in the form of an oracle, or Burden, entitled The Burden of the Beasts of the South, which gives us a vivid picture of great toil and risk undertaken in an effort which will prove utterly fruitless. A train of asses and camels, heavily laden, are seen struggling through the Negeb, or Desert of the South, which separates Palestine from Egypt. These are "the beasts of the South"; and this passage of the desert, now accomplished in a few hours by rail, was then a matter of weeks. The way was toilsome, nay perilous, and the prophet speaks of the region through which they are passing as "the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent,"[5] echoing, as it were, the description given by Moses in Deut. viii. 15, where he reminds Israel how the Lord their God had led them through "the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions." There are, indeed, some strange stories about this desert. Esarhaddon, when crossing it in 670 B.C., speaks of encountering there two-headed serpents, and Herodotus tells us how he made a special expedition to a city in this neighbourhood to see the bones of the winged serpents which haunted those parts. The winged snakes, so he declares, come flying from Arabia towards Egypt, and are met at this spot by the ibises, who stop and destroy them.[6] Both of the above statements have perplexed our modern scientists and still await explanation. Once more the prophet warns his hearers of the utter uselessness of this embassy, "For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose." These words have often been compared with a passage in the inscriptions of Sargon, referring to events at Ashdod in 711 B.C., in which the Assyrian king speaks of the peoples of Southern Palestine, including Judah, as carrying their presents to "Pharaoh king of Egypt, a prince who did not save them."[1] "Egypt helpeth in vain and to no purpose: therefore have I called her," adds the prophet as if from the mouth of God, "Rahab that sitteth still." If we follow this rendering of the Hebrew, which disregards the accents, then, since Rahab signifies "Pride," the force of the original might be expressed as follows:—"Insolence? nay rather Indolence!"[2] But since this rendering runs contrary to the accents it is better to read with the R.V.M. "They are *but* arrogancy: be still," *i.e.* desist, seek not their alliance. Also this agrees better with the tone of what follows in verse 15, "For thus saith the Lord GOD the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift."

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[1] Ps. lxxxvii. 1–4.

[2] Col. iii. 23–26. According to a Bull Inscription the king of Ashkelon benefited at the same time.

[3] Isa. xxxiii. 17.

[4] 2 Chron. xxxii. 23.

[5] Isa. xxx. 4.

[6] *Ibid.* xxix. 1, 2.

[7] *Ibid.* xxix. 15.

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[1] Isa. xxx. 1, R.V.M.
[2] Chap. XIII above.
[3] Isa. xx. 5.
[4] *Ibid.* xxx. 5.
[5] *Ibid.* xxx. 6.
[6] Hdt. ii. 75.

The passage just quoted shows that the alliance with Egypt had a further object than merely seeking the help of a rival power. The princes of Judah knew that without chariotry they could not hope to meet the Assyrian in the open field, and they were looking for the help of Egypt to enable them to supply this defect. To this policy of theirs Isaiah recurs in chap. xxxi. 1–3, and finds in it a third reason for condemning the Egyptian alliance, viz. because it showed a trust in man rather than in God, in flesh rather than in spirit. "Woe," cries the prophet, "to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses; and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are very strong: but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah. Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evil-doers, and against the help," *i.e.* the helpers, "of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians," adds the prophet, "are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is holpen shall fall, and they all shall fall together." How real does this reference to the Egyptian chariotry appear when we turn to the monuments of Egypt. See for instance the picture given by Maspero of an encounter between Egyptian and Asiatic chariots.[1] That picture belongs indeed to an earlier age, the time of Ramses II, but it is well supplemented by an Egyptian record of the age of Isaiah. Thus, when the Ethiopian king, Pionkhi,[2] was subduing Lower Egypt, one of his first cares was to inspect the studs of the conquered kings. One conquered prince is represented as saying to him, "I offer to thee gold to thy heart's content, and chrystal the image of thy own person, mighty steeds also the choice of the stud," and then, with the view of clearing himself by an oath from any suspicion of treason, as calling out before the conqueror and in the presence of the great princes of the North, "Any one here who has concealed his steeds or hidden his valuables, well! let him die, let his father die!" Again, when visiting the stud of brood-mares and the stalls of the young steeds of Namroti king of Hermopolis, and finding his horses famished, the Ethiopian king is represented as breaking forth in a torrent of indignation: "Wretched creatures are they to my heart who have starved my steeds: this is altogether more than any abomination thou hast done."[3] The army of Hezekiah was very weak in cavalry. Hence the Rabshakeh's galling taunt, "Now therefore, I pray thee, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them."[4] It thus appeared to the worldly-wise statesmen of those days that they were acting advisedly in seeking an alliance with Egypt; but the prophet warns them that the Holy One of Israel "also is wise," and that He will bring all their plans to nought, so that both the helper and the helped shall fall in a common destruction.[5]

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[1] Chapter XII, p. 115.

[2] Lit. "Insolence: they are Indolence," where the emphasis falls on the pronoun.

The above prophecy is seen to be fulfilled in the defeat of Egypt at Eltekeh as described in the passage from the Cylinder already quoted. The Egyptian army at Eltekeh consisted of bowmen and chariotry: no mention is made of cavalry. According to Maspero, "No Egyptian ever willingly trusted himself to the back of an horse."[6] It seems that they only used horses as a means of escape when things became desperate. May not this defect have contributed to their defeat at Eltekeh, seeing that the Assyrians at the time of the Sargonids used cavalry, as is abundantly evident both from their bas-reliefs [1] as well as from the words of the Rabshakeh just quoted. Nothing is said of any captives or spoil taken at Eltekeh, as would probably have been the case had the battle been fought in Egypt; but the capture alive of the commander of the Egyptian chariotry, and of the Egyptian princes, as well as of the commander of the Ethiopian chariotry, shows that the victory was a signal one for the Assyrians. Thus Judah was not to be saved " by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen," but " by Jehovah their God." [2]

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[1] *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 225.

[2] Chapter XIII, p. 126.

[3] *Records of the Past.* First Series, vol. ii, pp. 99, 100, 91.

[4] Isa. xxxvi. 8.

[5] Isa. xxxi. 3.

[5] *Struggle of the Nations*, p. 218.

The place where the battle of Eltekeh was fought has not yet been identified with any certainty, but two suggestions have been made: (i) *Beit Likia*, 2 miles S. of Beth-horon, (ii) *Lezka*, near Ekron and on the road to Egypt. The latter identification, due to Sir G. A. Smith, is the more likely of the two. *Beit Likia* is too far up the valley of Ajalon to allow of the meeting of large armies. *Lezka*, on the other hand, lies in the more level country to the south of Ekron and would thus be better suited for the employment of chariotry. It is also near to both Timnah and Ekron, which are mentioned in the succeeding context.

The defeat at Eltekeh was followed by the siege and capture of Eltekeh and Timnah. These towns are mentioned along with Ekron in Joshua xix. 43, 44. Timnah or Timnath, the modern *Tibneh*, is about 10 miles S.E. of Ekron as the crow flies. It appears at this time to have come under the rule of Ekron. This may have happened when the Philistines took it from Ahaz; [3] and though Ekron had since come under the rule of Hezekiah, the same arrangement may have been continued. Timnah lies much further inland than Ekron, on the S. side of the Wady es Sarar, the Biblical valley of Sorek,[4] at the point where it penetrates into the hills of Judah. Here, owing to the confluence of two other wadies, the valley instead of narrowing forms a fertile basin. " When you see this basin," writes Sir G. A. Smith, " you at once perceive its importance." He then goes on to say that not only is it fertile and well-watered, but that through this valley runs the best road to Jerusalem from places so far apart as Ekron and Ashdod, and possibly Ashkelon, and that this was the path chosen by Philistine invaders in the days of the Judges and of David. Timnah was thus an important post, both as supplying food and forage for the Assyrian army, and also as securing a route by which a force could be despatched against Jerusalem. From Eltekeh and Timnah Sennacherib carried off some spoil. May we not also suppose that at the latter place he took care to leave a garrison to guard the road to Jerusalem?

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[1] See Maspero's *Passing of the Empires*, pp. 3, 7, 8, 189, 305, 315; also p. 8, note 1.

[2] Hos. i. 7.

[3] 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.

[4] Handcock, p. 351.

In dealing with Ekron, Sennacherib claims to have acted with moderation and discernment, making a distinction between rulers and subjects, and between the innocent and the guilty. Rebel rulers are slain and their bodies impaled—a common practice in ancient warfare, often alluded to in the inscriptions and depicted on the bas-reliefs: compare Joshua x. 26. Rebel subjects suffer the milder punishment of transportation. Rebellion, we notice, is described as "sin." This is the same term which Hezekiah employs in his humble message to Sennacherib: "I have offended" (2 Kings xviii. 14) is literally "I have sinned." The liberation of Padi and his reinstatement as king of Ekron, were probably demanded by Sennacherib when Hezekiah made his submission.

In describing the preparations made for the final struggle we have advanced a long way into the contest itself. This was inevitable, since we are concerned not only with prophecy but with its fulfilment. Hence the foretold futility of seeking help from Egypt has led us on to the defeat of that power at the battle of Eltekeh, resulting in the capture of that and two neighbouring cities. Here it may be well for us to pause, and, having traced the course of the invader thus far, to leave to another chapter the puzzling questions as to the policy which dictated his further movements and the path pursued by him in the south of Judah.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

"Evil is come down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem."—Mic. i. 12.

IN studying the onward march of Sennacherib we have hitherto followed in the main the order of events as narrated on the Cylinder, placing the battle of Eltekeh after the conquest of Philistia. The Scripture account carries us two stages further, viz. to Lachish and Libnah.[1] If this order be correct, then a second army must have come from Egypt to meet the invader, for it was while he was at Libnah that he "heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come out to fight against thee."[2] Are we then justified in following this order and in supposing that a second army made its appearance? I think so: for, in the first place, in his march south Sennacherib would hardly be likely to leave a small town like Ekron uncaptured in his rear, seeing that to take such a fortress would involve no great delay. Now on the Cylinder the fate of Ekron is closely connected with the battle of Eltekeh, for we are expressly told that the Egyptian army were marching to the relief of Ekron when Sennacherib defeated them at that place. Eltekeh, then, was fought before the Assyrian marched south to Lachish. A further strong argument for this view can be drawn from the Scripture account where the Rab-shakeh, when taunting Hezekiah with looking to Egypt for help, says, "Behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt."[3] "*This bruised reed*": when was Egypt bruised? Some will answer, in the time of Sargon at the battle of Raphia in 720 B.C.; and again, when Ashdod was taken in 711. But with regard to Raphia on the Egyptian frontier, Sargon never invaded Egypt after the battle of Raphia, though he claims to have defeated her on that occasion; whilst the leading away of the Egyptian and Ethiopian garrison of Ashdod, though done, as the prophet describes "to the shame of Egypt,"[4] was in reality only a small affair and could hardly be regarded as a "bruising" of that power. Besides, Raphia was fought nineteen years before the invasion of Sennacherib, and ten years had elapsed since the capture of Ashdod; but the Rabshakeh's words point to something that had just taken place: "*this bruised reed.*" We must therefore suppose him to be alluding to the battle of Eltekeh which had so recently been fought.

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[1] Isa. xxxvi. 2, and xxxvii. 8.

[2] Isa. xxxvii. 9.

[3] Isa. xxxvi. 6.

[4] Isa. xx. 4.

From Eltekeh, then, the Assyrian has gone on to Lachish, which lies 16 miles E.N.E. from Gaza and on the direct route from that town to Jerusalem. At Lachish Sennacherib established his headquarters and erected a fortified camp, as shown on the famous bas-relief; for Lachish was a strong fortress and not easily taken. With Lachish as his centre we may picture the Assyrian capturing that group of small towns in the prophet Micah's country, on which he weaves a chain of paronomasia ominous of their sad fate and connects that fate with the evil coming on Jerusalem: "It is come even unto Judah; it reacheth unto the gate of my people" . . . "evil is come down from Jehovah unto the gate of Jerusalem."[1] How suitably may we place that prophecy side by side with the statement that it was from Lachish that the Rabshakeh was sent with a great army to Jerusalem!

But we are allowed to accompany the invader a step further. The Rabshakeh on returning to his master finds that he has left Lachish for Libnah.[2] This is a silent indication that Lachish has fallen: a link, surely, between the Scripture story and the scene depicted on the bas-relief. The site of Libnah is unknown, but there are not wanting indications as to its whereabouts. In Joshua xv. 42, 44 Achzib and Mareshah are grouped with Libnah: in Mic. i. 13–15 they are grouped with Lachish. Libnah, therefore, must have been near Lachish. Again, in Joshua x. 31, Joshua coming from the north marches from Libnah to Lachish. Libnah, then, lies to the north of Lachish, and perhaps we may venture the guess that it lies on the road to Jerusalem, and that with Lachish, Libnah, and Timnah in his hands Sennacherib would possess a chain of fortresses along that road.

We have now traced Sennacherib's line of march to Libnah, but we cannot follow him any further. The last stages of his campaign are unwritten, and he meant that it should be so, for they were involved in disaster. We cannot tell whether, on hearing of Tirhakah's advance, he marched towards Gaza to meet him, or whether he fell back northwards so as to be nearer the force which he had despatched to invest Jerusalem. The story told Herodotus by the Egyptian priests that the two armies confronted one another at Pelusium, the frontier city of Egypt, is, as we shall see, altogether untrustworthy: indeed it is very questionable whether they ever met at all. I rather think that the Assyrian, hearing of the disaster which had overtaken his army encamped before Jerusalem, beat a hasty retreat, and can only have fought rear-guard actions with the Egyptian troops. "His rock," cries the prophet, "shall pass away by reason of terror, and his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign, saith Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem." [1]

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[1] Mic. i. 9–15.

[2] Isa. xxxvii. 8.

Since we cannot further accompany Sennacherib, we are now set free to give our undivided attention to Jerusalem. The Assyrian has already been in Palestine for some time; the Philistine cities have fallen or been subdued, the invader has been victorious over Egypt at Eltekeh, has besieged and captured Lachish, and is ravaging the south of Judah. For the time being Hezekiah has lost his kingdom and has seen multitudes of his subjects swept away into captivity. What shall he do? Clearly from the earthly point of view his only way is to come to terms with the invader. Isaiah would no doubt say, "Wait and see what Jehovah will do for His city." But Hezekiah's faith is not equal to this. He therefore sends in his submission to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have offended; return from me; that which thou puttest on me will I bear." [2] He is willing to pay the tribute assigned whatever it may be, if only he may be left in peace. And no doubt he entertains great hopes that the Assyrian will agree to this. For since Egypt is known to be his objective and he is some distance on the way there, it may reasonably be expected that after receiving a heavy tribute he will continue his march. At first all seems promising. The amount of the tribute is named: it is raised with great difficulty, and even Jehovah's sacred temple has to be stripped to satisfy the tyrant.[3] But now, surely, all will at last be well. Not so, however; for back come the "ambassadors of peace," "weeping bitterly." "The treacherous dealer" has received the tribute, and now demands the surrender of the city! It was, indeed, an act of gross injustice, but we must not unduly blacken even Sennacherib. Let us give him the benefit of the doubt, and suppose that when he demanded the tribute he acted honestly, even though he drove a hard bargain; but that on the receipt of it second thoughts came into his mind, and he began to feel that it would never do to leave a strong fortress like Jerusalem untaken in his rear, and that he must make himself master of the town by fair means or foul. To surrender Jerusalem was out of the question for one who like Hezekiah believed in, and trusted in, the God of Jerusalem. Further, to do this would probably mean captivity and national extinction: witness, the large number of captives that were already being taken away. Who could trust a foe who had shown by his conduct over the tribute that he was not to be depended upon? Great indeed then must have been the alarm and agitation at Jerusalem on the return of the envoys, and it was heightened when shortly after a strong force made its appearance on the neighbouring hills, for a visible and unmistakable proof was then given that the Assyrian meant to have the fortress. "The king of Assyria sent the Tartan, and the Rab-saris, and the Rab-shakeh with a great army unto Jerusalem."[1] The presence of this great army under three high officers was intended to terrify and overawe the townsfolk no less than their king. It seemed to say that if the city was surrendered at once, all might yet be well; but that if it held out it would most certainly be invested and starved into a surrender. In the first instance there was no intention of any assault. Indeed, as the Rabshakeh's speech bears witness, an attempt was to be made to hide the iron fist under the velvet glove by picturing the advantages to be obtained by yielding to the Assyrian's demand.

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[1] Isa. xxxi. 9.

[2] 2 Kings xviii. 14.

[3] *Ibid.* xviii. 15, 16.

With regard to the three high officials, or generals—for we may view them in both lights—who led the great army, the Tartan is the Commander-in-chief. In a great military empire like Assyria we are not surprised to learn from the Eponym Lists that the Tartan ranked next to the king. The inscriptions speak of the Tartans of foreign armies, such as Egypt and Qummukh, so that the post intended is certain, though the origin of the term still hangs in doubt. The title Rab-shakeh signifies "Chief Cup-bearer," or according to another derivation "Chief of the High Ones," *i.e.* General Staff-Officer. The title Rab-saris signifies "Chief Eunuch," *i.e.* Chief of the Harem, but some render it "Head Chief."

Sennacherib has not appeared before Jerusalem in person: he has only sent three chief officials. "The strong, proud Hezekiah, its king"[2] will act in a corresponding way. When the three Assyrian officials come forward to parley, they are met, not by the Jewish monarch, but by three of *his* officials: Eliakim the son of Hilkiah which was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. Of these three, Eliakim holds the highest post, formerly held by Shebna.[3] He is the vizier or major-domo, on whom the government of the country rests.[1] His title resembles that of the *Nagir Ekalli*, "Prefect of the Palace," among the Assyrians, a post which ranks third or fourth on the Eponym Lists. Shebna, having been degraded, now occupies the second place, that of Scribe or Secretary ; [2] and next to him stands Joah the Recorder,[3] the Court Annalist, but according to some the Remembrancer, whose duty it was to remind the monarch of important matters.

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[1] 2 Kings xviii. 17. [2] Bull Inscriptions. [3] Isa. xxii. 15.

The spot at which the Assyrian host approached Jerusalem, viz. the conduit of the Upper Pool and the highway of the Fuller's Field, and at which the conference was held, is of interest from the fact that it was at this very spot that Isaiah some thirty-four years before had confronted Ahaz when that monarch was preparing to meet the attack of Rezin and Pekah.[4] Had Ahaz then listened to the prophet, this hostile army had never been suffered to take up its position there. If we enquire as to the exact locality of this spot, some authorities, led by recent excavations, point us to the south side of the city. These place the Upper Pool to the N.E. of the present Pool of Siloam and S. of the Tyropoean valley. On the other hand, when we remember that Ahaz was expecting an attack from the north, and that in the age of Josephus a spot on the north of the city was still called "the camp of the Assyrians," whilst in the same quarter stood a monument called "the Monument of the Fuller," [5] we find three concurring arguments in favour of the north side. A fourth may be gathered from the lie of the ground ; for on no other side could a conference so conveniently be held between those outside the city and those on the town wall.

Arrived, then, at this fateful spot, the Rabshakeh opens the proceedings. He is chosen as spokesman for two reasons : first, because he can speak Hebrew ; and secondly, because he is a born orator, a man of native eloquence, fertile in argument, loud, boisterous, imperious, persuasive and threatening by turns ; one who means by his personality and by his arguments to make an impression upon his hearers. Hezekiah, the king of the Jews, is the descendant of a long line of princes, reaching much further back than the lately risen dynasty of the Sargonids ; but he shall receive scant courtesy from the lips of this blustering bully. "Say ye now to Hezekiah," he cries, "Thus saith the Great King, the king of Assyria." This is an abbreviation of the favourite style of the Sargonid kings down to the fall of the empire, which runs thus : "The great king, the mighty king, the king of nationalities, the king of Assyria." Thus intentionally belittling Hezekiah, the Rabshakeh proceeds to speak in his master's name: "What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou art finding counsel and strength for the war in vain empty promises. What is it that encourages thee to dare to rebel against me? Thou art trusting to the staff of this bruised reed, this Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it:[1] so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. But if thou say, We trust in Jehovah our God: then think what Hezekiah has been doing all over the country, removing Jehovah's altars and requiring his worshippers to come to Jerusalem." These last words show that the Assyrians had, as Cheyne says, "a well-organised intelligence department": Hezekiah's religious reforms were known to them, and appeared in their eyes as sacrilege. Turning back to the topic of help from Egypt, our versatile orator next indulges in a tone of light banter. "Thou art looking to Egypt for horses. Well, then, give pledges"—pledges of fidelity—"to my master the king of Assyria, and I will furnish thee with two thousand horses, if thou canst find the riders. For how canst thou hope to repel the attack of the least captain in my master's service?" Then advancing a quite different argument which might influence the more religiously minded of his hearers, he cries, "Am I now come up without Jehovah against this land to destroy it? Jehovah said to me, Go against this land, and destroy it." These words have puzzled many, but the explanation is that the Assyrians, when it suited their purpose, used to make believe that the god of the country with which they were at war, was displeased with his own people, and was employing the Assyrian to punish them. Thus Esarhaddon, speaking of his father's ruthless destruction of Babylon, makes out that Merodach, the god of Babylon, was displeased because those in power had despoiled his temple and sent its treasures as a bribe to the king of Elam to secure his help, and that on this account he had resolved to lay waste the land and destroy its inhabitants. In such a supposition there was a glimmering of the truth, and in the case of Judah it expressed the actual truth, as some of the Rabshakeh's hearers must have felt.

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[1] Isa. xxii. 20, 21.

[2] 2 Sam. viii. 17, and xx. 25.

[3] 2 Sam. viii. 16, xx. 24, and 1 Kings iv. 3.

[4] Isa. vii. 3.

[5] *Wars of the Jews*, Bk. v, 7, 3 and 4, 2.

The ministers of Hezekiah are now growing alarmed at the forceful eloquence of the Assyrian officer, and the effect it may so easily have on the townsfolk. "Converse with us," they cry, "in Aramaic"—the usual language of diplomacy in those days—"for we understand it. Surely these state deliberations are not meant for the people on the wall." In an instant the wily orator sees his advantage. "Don't imagine," says he, "that my master has sent me to parley with you and your master. The men on the wall, the townsfolk, who are madly holding out only to be reduced to the last dire extremities of famine[1]—they are the persons to whom I am sent." Then raising his voice he called aloud in Hebrew, "Hear the words of the Great King, the king of Assyria. Don't let Hezekiah deceive you: he can never deliver you out of my hand. Don't let him make you trust in Jehovah, saying, Jehovah will surely deliver us: this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Don't listen to Hezekiah. I am your friend. Make your peace with me and come out to meet me. Then go back to your homes and their surroundings. You can enjoy all these freely, until I come and take you away to a land like your own, a land of peace and plenty,[2] for I want you to live in comfort rather than endure the horrors of a siege." What a tempting bribe was this to the country folk cooped up within the walls of an over-crowded city! But our orator continues: "Heed not Hezekiah, then, when he tries to persuade you, saying, Jehovah will deliver us. Only think: have any of the gods of the nations been able to deliver their land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? What has become of the gods of Hamath and Arpad? of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?[3] Your neighbours in Samaria: were their gods able to deliver them? If all the other gods have failed their worshippers, why should Jehovah be able to deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" A very powerful speech, and full of rude eloquence, but to the great credit of the loyal patriots in Jerusalem received in dead silence, "for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not."

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[1] Cf. Ezek. xxix. 6.

Shocked at the blasphemy of the Rabshakeh's words, and deeply moved by the gravity of the crisis, Hezekiah's ministers returned to their master with their clothes rent, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh. On hearing their recital, he too rent his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth,[4] and then, after sending his ministers to the prophet, betook himself into the temple of Jehovah. The humbled monarch has at last learned the policy which Isaiah has so long striven to inculcate, viz. the policy of faith. Like Jacob before his meeting with Esau, he has found that all other expedients are vain, and that the only way is the upward way, the way of prayer.

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[1] The coarse tone of this part of the Rabshakeh's speech finds its parallel in the account given of the Arabian campaign of Ashurbanipal.

[2] "A land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and honey." 2 Kings xviii. 32.

[3] Since the Rabshakeh is speaking of Assyrian conquests in the West, Sepharvaim can hardly be the Babylonian Sippara, but must be sought for in N. Syria. Halévy identifies it with the Sibraim of Ezek. xlvii. 16, on the borders of Hamath and Damascus, *i.e.* with the Shabarain destroyed by Shalmaneser V in 727 B.C. The sites of Hena and Ivvah, 2 Kings xviii. 34, are still unknown, but must be sought for in the same quarter.

[4] Sackcloth, the material of which cornsacks were made, is often spoken of in Scripture as used in mourning. It was generally worn as an outer garment. Hence the common expression to "gird on" sackcloth. The Jews of Elephantine, sorrowing over the destruction of their temple, write word to

The embassy sent by Hezekiah to Isaiah consisted of two chief ministers of state and the principal members of the priesthood. This shows the high esteem in which the king held the person and office of the prophet. In his view the prophet stands in very close relation to the God who sends him, and is therefore high in His favour, and thus fitted to act as an intercessor.[1] Hence the following message: "Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of contumely; for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be Jehovah thy God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which Jehovah thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left." In language, probably proverbial, the pious king lays stress on the fact that the crisis is come, that things cannot remain as they are: it is a question of either destruction or deliverance. He then finds some comfort in the thought that Jehovah, the prophet's God, may possibly take notice of the blasphemies that have just been uttered; for, in comparing Jehovah with the gods of the nations, the Assyrian commander has deeply insulted the Living God. Here, surely, is ground for hope and ground for prayer. Will the prophet, therefore, lift up his prayer for the remnant that is left? The "remnant": how forcible is this term when we think of the multitudes already carried captive! Did Hezekiah, when he uttered it, recall the promise of Isa. x. 20–23, that a "remnant" of what was then a populous kingdom should be spared to return to the Mighty God? To the king's embassy Isaiah returned a most comforting reply. Hezekiah is not to fear; for Jehovah has heard the blasphemy of the servants of the Assyrian king, and will put within him a spirit of craven fear, so that on presently hearing some bad news he will hasten back to his own land, where his end will be to perish by assassination.

The Rabshakeh has now returned to his master at Libnah; but not so the Tartan and the Rabsaris. They are left behind with the "great army" to blockade Jerusalem, as may be inferred

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the Persian governor, Bagoas, that they have "sackclothed" their clothing and are fasting.

[1] Cf. Jer. xv. 1 and Ezek. xiv. 14.

from Sennacherib's own account, and in doing this they are fulfilling the prophecies of Isa. i. 8 and xxix. 3. In the meantime while the siege of Libnah is going on, news arrives of the approach of a second Egyptian army under the command of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia.[1] This leads Sennacherib to make one last effort to obtain the surrender of Jerusalem. To make himself master of this strong city lying in his rear was on strategic grounds a matter of the first importance. Further, the surrender of Jerusalem would set free a large body of men to swell the ranks of the army with which he hoped to meet the Ethiopian king. He decides, therefore, to see what can be done by letter, since letters are sometimes more efficacious than messages. When the message has been given, it can be met with silence, or set aside; but the written letter still confronts us, as if demanding an answer. However, that nothing may be left undone, along with the letter goes a message to the same effect, and in the Biblical narrative message and letter are fused into one, as follows: "Thus shall ye speak unto Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have destroyed, Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Tel-Assar? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah?"

Sennacherib's letter is free from the scurrilous tone which marks the speech of the Rabshakeh; but the blasphemy which it contains, if more measured, is none the less emphatic. After giving Hezekiah the title of "king," he begins thus: "Let not thy God deceive thee." The Rabshakeh had said to the populace: "Let not Hezekiah deceive you." Sennacherib says to the king: "Let not thy God deceive thee." He then goes on to advance the same argument as the Rabshakeh, viz. that the kings of Assyria are irresistible, but goes further back in history in order that he may point to the westward advance of the Assyrian colossus. Thus, to the conquest of Hamath, Arpad, and other states in N. Syria, he prefixes the conquest made by his "fathers" —*i.e.* his royal predecessors—of cities and territories lying more to the east, which had now formed part of the empire for over a century; such as Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the Beni-Eden in Tel-Ashur: names of fairly frequent occurrence in the inscriptions. Gozan, the Assyrian *Guzana*, lies about the head waters of the *Khabur*, the Habor of Scripture, called in 2 Kings xvii. 6 "the river of Gozan." This was one of the districts to which the Ten Tribes were carried captive. Haran—the "Road-city," as lying on the great road to the West—the home of Nahor, formed the capital of a province and became a free city of the empire. It was at this place that Assyria made her last stand after the fall of Nineveh. Rezeph, or *Rasappa*, which according to Olmstead formed the most extensive province of the empire, lay still further to the east and bordered on Assyria Proper. *Bit Adini*, the territory of the "Children of Eden," was a small kingdom on either side of the Middle Euphrates. By this recital the Assyrian seems to say, "Mark the rising tide of Assyrian conquest: and how canst thou hope to stem it?"

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[1] Tirhakah, as stated in Chapter XIII, was either co-regent with his cousin Shabataka, or else he is called king of Ethiopia by anticipation.

Very striking and impressive is the conduct of Hezekiah on the receipt of Sennacherib's letter. His faith has grown exceedingly in the sunshine of that cheering message received from Jehovah through the prophet, and in this spirit of faith he now draws near to his God. "Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord." According to Coldecott he "went up" into the Royal Oratory above the lofty porch of the temple,[1] and there "spread it before the Lord," as if for God to see and read for Himself the blasphemy contained in it. A similar symbolic action has been pointed out in 1 Macc. iii. 48, where the Jews spread before Jehovah copies of the Book of the Law in which the heathen had drawn pictures of their idols.[2] Very touchingly does Hezekiah explain the significance of his act in the simple heartfelt prayer with which he accompanies it. In a spirit of the purest monotheism he thus breathes forth his soul: "O Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, that art enthroned upon the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear; open thine eyes, O Jehovah, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a truth, O Jehovah, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries, and their land, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Jehovah our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art Jehovah, even thou only."[3] It will be noticed that the words of Hezekiah's prayer are as catholic as they are monotheistic. He desires, not so much the destruction of the invader, or even the deliverance of Israel, as the glory of Jehovah, the Living God in contrast to dead idols; the God of all the kingdoms of the earth; and his wish is, that all these kingdoms may own Him as their God.

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[1] *Solomon's Temple*, p. 153.

[2] See Cambridge Bible *in loco*.

[3] Better, as in 2 Kings xix. 19 R.V.M., "that thou, O Lord [Heb. Jehovah], art God, even thou only."

Hezekiah speaks in his prayer of the Assyrians as burning the gods of their enemies. Now the gods worshipped by the Assyrians were in most cases the same as those worshipped by their Semitic neighbours, only they gave the chief place to their national god, Ashur. Hence their usual practice seems to have been to take the gods captive: compare Isa. xlvi. 2. Sargon, indeed, tells us how he made a bonfire of the temple of the god Khaldia at Arbu in Ararat.[1] But then the people of Ararat were not Semites. Sennacherib, however, we may feel sure, would not have hesitated to burn the gods of his enemies; witness the exultation with which he describes his soldiers as "smashing" the gods of Babylon. But perhaps we may take Hezekiah's words in a more general sense as referring to a very common practice of the Assyrians, viz. to set fire to conquered cities. When all around them was burned up, the images of the gods would suffer the same fate.

In response to the king's prayer the prophet sent the following answer: "Thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word which Jehovah hath spoken concerning him: The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at [lit. 'after'] thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice? Thou hast even lifted up thine eyes on high against the Holy One of Israel.[2] By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the innermost parts of Lebanon, and I will cut down its tallest cedars and its choicest fir trees; and I will come into its furthest height, its garden-like woodland. I have digged and drunk [foreign][3] waters, and with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the Nile-arms of Egypt."

How striking is the contrast between the impassioned earnestness of Hezekiah's prayer and the calm sublimity of the oracle sent by the prophet. Cheyne asks whether Isaiah had been supernaturally warned of Hezekiah's prayer, as in the case of Saul and Ananias, Acts ix. 11. This is very possible, since in his message the prophet speaks only of the blasphemy of Sennacherib's servants, which looks as if he had not heard at the time that the Assyrian had sent Hezekiah a letter. By "the virgin daughter of Zion" is meant the inviolate Jerusalem, which the Assyrian was seeking to dishonour. "The Holy One of Israel" is a name of very frequent occurrence in the Book of Isaiah. It is found eleven times in the earlier part, twelve times in the later: but only six times in the rest of the Old Testament, not counting 2 Kings xix. 22 which is part of the present passage. The reproaches uttered by Sennacherib are of a double character, both positive and negative. On the one hand he blasphemes Jehovah, classing Him with the idol gods, on the other hand he attributes everything to himself. It is all what *I* have done: witness the emphatic personal pronoun in verses 24 and 25: "With the multitude of my chariots am *I* come up," "*I* have digged and drunk." In his dream of conquest Sennacherib confidently anticipates what he is going to do. First, he will go to the Lebanon and cut down the choicest of its forest giants, doubtless to roof his palace: then, he will dig wells for the water supply of his army as he crosses the desert on his way to Egypt. Whatever obstacles await him there he will remove with the same ease as the Egyptian farmer removes with his foot the little barriers of soil when he is irrigating his land. Indeed, this dream of what he is *going* to do reads more like a triumphal progress than a military campaign. *Mutatis mutandis* it is not unlike Napoleon's delirious dream of what he *had* done:

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[1] Thureau-Dangin, *Huitiéme Campagna de Sargon*, p. 45, line 279.

[2] The correct reading according to the Hebrew accents.

[3] Cf. 2 Kings xix. 24.

"Over Egypt's sands, over Alpine snows,
At the pyramid, at the mountain;
Where the wave of the lordly Danube flows,
And by the Italian fountain."

In his dreamlike anticipations, it will be noticed that the Assyrian is represented as thinking only of the Lebanon and Egypt: he says nothing at all about Judah. Judah and Judah's God are left out of the account. He little imagines that the Holy One of Israel is about to block his path. Jehovah does not enter into his dream: no, nor for the matter of that does Ashur: he is a god unto himself.

Isaiah, we observe, makes Sennacherib drive his chariots up to the height of the mountains. This is what the Assyrians delighted to do. Overcoming obstacles was one of the characteristics of this martial race, and in this Sennacherib was not a whit behind. If a mountain ascent proved too steep, he had his chariot drawn up after him with ropes, while he himself "clambered up on foot like the wild ox."[1] Further, the Assyrian is pictured as bent on penetrating into the recesses of the Lebanon in search of tall cedars. This part of his imagined programme he was permitted to carry out, and in his longest inscription written seven years later, in which he gives us a very detailed account of his works at Nineveh, occurs a passage which deserves to be placed side by side with the words of the prophet, and all the more so since it refers to what was done in this very campaign of the year 701. The recital runs thus: "At that time Ashur and Ishtar, who loved my priesthood and have pronounced my name, showed me where the great cedar trunks, which had grown lofty from distant days and become exceeding mighty, sprang up, as they lay concealed in the mountains of Sirara."[1] Sirara is the Sirion of Deut. iii. 9, which, as there stated, was the Sidonian name for Hermon. The "Nile-arms," Heb. *ye'orim*, rendered "streams" in chap. xix. 6, is the Plural of an Egyptian loan-word, which found its way into the Assyro-Babylonian as well as into Hebrew. By "the Nile-arms of Egypt" the Assyrian means all that is likely to block his path in that country.

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, col. i. 68, 69.

We may now go forward to the second part of the Isaianic oracle, in which Jehovah, who is Himself the speaker, addresses the invader, and throws a very different light on his doings. "Hast thou not heard how I have done it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops, and as a field *of corn* before it be grown up.[2] But I know thy sitting down, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy raging against me, Because of thy raging against me, and for that thine arrogancy is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put mine hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

The appeal to the Divine foreknowledge, with which this portion of the oracle commences, introduces a doctrine not altogether new to the Assyrians. Ashurbanipal speaks of the gods Ashur and Sin as having pronounced his name for sovereignty from far-off days. Kay points us to the prophecy of Moses, Deut. xxviii. 49–53, uttered seven hundred years before, in which he predicts the judgments of Jehovah on a disobedient people, and tells how He will bring against them from far a nation of fierce countenance whose language is unintelligible, adding "he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land." At last Jehovah has "brought it to pass," and it is as His unconscious instrument that the Assyrian is allowed "to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps." In the chapter on the fenced cities it has been pointed out how faithfully these words reflect the very language used by Sennacherib in his inscriptions.[1] Sennacherib attributes the weakness of his enemies to their being "overwhelmed with the fear of the brightness of my lordship," and he speaks thus of both Lulî of Sidon and Hezekiah of Judah.[2] But the Isaianic oracle sheds a further light on the matter. It is Jehovah who suffers the defenders of strong walled cities to be overwhelmed with such sudden panic and extreme weakness, that the prophet uses no less than four clauses to describe their state. They are "as grass of the field," "as the green herb," "as the grass on the housetops," in fine, as any vegetation "blasted before it be grown up."[3] Not, indeed, that this was by any means always the case, but the divided state of both Phoenicia and Philistia on the approach of Sennacherib is eloquent as to the fear inspired by the Assyrians.

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[1] *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets, etc., in the British Museum*, Part xxvi. p. 24.

[2] In 2 Kings xix. 26, "as corn blasted before it be grown up."

Jehovah next declares that He knows what the Assyrian is about: views his campaigns from start to finish: hears his blasphemies: hears even his unspoken "self-complacency"—rather than "arrogancy"—and means to turn him back in true Assyrian fashion; in fact, speaking figuratively, to treat him in the way he himself treats conquered kings. "I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest," *i.e.* I will send thee home disgraced; for the figure here used is taken from the way in which Assyrian monarchs sought to disgrace captive kings. Thus Manasseh of Judah was taken with hooks, bound with fetters, and carried to Babylon, doubtless at the time when Esarhaddon was holding his court in that city.[4] In something of the same way Ashurbanipal describes his treatment of Vaiteh king of Arabia: "grasping with my hand a butcher's knife, I bored his cheek, through his jaw I put a rope, I placed a dog-collar on him, and at the eastern gate of Nineveh I set him to guard his cage."[5] Similarly on a bas-relief at the gate of Zinjirli Esarhaddon is represented holding ropes, by which Tirhakah of Ethiopia and Baal of Tyre are ringed through the nose.[6] Probably in this case, as in the Isaianic oracle, the representation is figurative, and is meant to signify that they are in his power: a false boast, indeed, in the case of Esarhaddon, but far otherwise in the case of Jehovah, who will very shortly translate His words into deeds.

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[1] Page 215.

[2] Taylor Cylinder, ii. 35, 36, and iii. 29, 30.

[3] 2 Kings xix. 26.

[4] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.

[5] Rassam Cylinder, col. ix. 105–111.

[6] Maspero's *Passing of the Empires*, p. 375.

The last part of the oracle is addressed to Hezekiah and his people: if less poetic, it is at the same time more impassioned in its closing sentences, in which Jehovah three times over declares His intention to rescue His chosen city. The utterance runs thus: "And this shall be the sign unto thee: ye shall eat this year that which groweth of itself, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of mount Zion they that shall escape. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform this. Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast a mount against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah. For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

"And this shall be a sign unto thee": the same words were addressed to Moses when he was called at Horeb to be the deliverer of Israel. "This shall be the token [1] unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." [1] The sign, or token, lies in the promise; and the promise here is that by the third year things will have returned to their usual course. "This year," the year of the invasion, "ye shall eat"—as ye are doing—"that which groweth of itself." Why is it that they are eating the self-sown? Because, say some, the presence of the Assyrian in the land prevented the sowing. But that could hardly have been the case; for the agricultural year began in October, and the sowing was done between October and February, before the Assyrian came into the land. A more likely explanation is that the year of the invasion was the seventh or Sabbatical year, when by Divine command the land was to lie fallow.[2] Now once every half-century this Sabbatical year was followed by the Jubilee year, and during the Jubilee year also the land was to lie fallow, the people living on the self-sown.[3] We may, therefore, suppose the year of the invasion to have been a Sabbatic year, and the following, or "second year" to have been a Jubilee year. Or, again, we may understand the oracle thus: "Ye are keeping this year as a Sabbatical year, and living on the self-sown. Keep next year as a Jubilee year, a year of deliverance from Assyrian slavery into which ye have sold yourselves, and continue to live on the self-sown. The above explanation is rendered more probable from the fact that the Hebrew word, translated "that which groweth of itself,"[1] is only used elsewhere in the regulations respecting the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year in Lev. xxv. 4, 11. The period embraced by the sign in all probability was not much over a year. The sign was given in the late summer, when the current year was hastening to its close. In October the second year began, and by then, or shortly after, the invader must have quitted the country, and the escaped remnant would have their hands full in repairing the ruin he had wrought. But by Jehovah's loving command, during that year they were not to trouble about the sowing, but to live on the self-sown. Then in the following autumn, which ushered in the third year, they could go back to the cultivation of the land. But alas! how few would be left to undertake this work! What multitudes had been swept away into captivity! What multitudes had fallen! Here, then, was need for the further promise which follows, and which finds happy expression in well-known proverbial language in consonance with the terms employed in the previous verse: "And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." In chap. xxvii. 6 a similar promise, but with a wider range, is to be made good to Israel in "days to come." Here, however, the promise concerns the immediate future; and lest it should seem too good to be realised in the present distressful state of the nation, it is backed with the assurance that "the zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform this." This is the same assurance that we find given at the close of the great Messianic prophecy in Isa. ix. 6, 7, and the reason is not far to seek. For both prophecies have to do with the continuance of the Davidic throne, which here as there is seen to be imperilled by the Assyrian. The "zeal," or jealousy, of Jehovah means that Jehovah is jealous for His honour, which is indissolubly bound up with the promise given in 2 Sam. vii. that the Messiah should spring up in the family of David. That promise, as it ensures the continuance of the house of David, so it ensures the continuance of Jerusalem as the seat of the Davidic monarchy; "for there are set thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David." [1]

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[1] Ex. iii. 12. The word "token" is the same word that is here translated "sign."

[2] Lev. xxv. 4.

[3] *Ibid.* xxv. 11.

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[1] *Saphiach*, "growth from spilled kernels," lit. that which is "poured out," accidentally, in harvesting.

With what a burning zeal are the closing words of this oracle poured forth: "Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city"—"unto" not "into"—"nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast a mount against it." "*He shall not come unto this city*": he shall not even touch it, for invisible bounds are set about it, as though around a second Sinai. Not an arrow shall be shot across those bounds; the spearman with his small round shield on the left arm shall not rush forward in the fray to mount the scaling ladder planted against the wall; the Royal Engineers of the Great King shall not cast up "mounts" for the battering-rams to be brought to play on the fortifications. The Zion of the Holy One of Israel shall remain untouched, inviolate. Then once more is the promise repeated that the invader shall go home baffled, and a second time is the assurance given, "he shall not come unto this city, saith Jehovah." Surely after such strong repeated promises Hezekiah and his ministers will put off their sackcloth, even though all is still a matter of faith, and Jehovah has not seen fit to unfold by what means He intends to effect the deliverance of His city.

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[1] Ps. cxxii. 5. Cf. also Ps. cxxxii. 17.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GREAT DELIVERANCE

"We have a strong city: salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks."—Isa. xxvi. 1.

IN this chapter we reach the climax of our subject. The deliverance of Jerusalem by Jehovah Himself is the goal to which the Isaianic prophecies at which we have been looking point. For this reason, instead of sticking to chronological order, I have thought it best to take the story of Babylon under Sennacherib, closing with the sack of that city in 689 B.C., before the story of Jerusalem, ending with her great deliverance in the autumn of 701 B.C. Babylon's story is but a by-play: Jerusalem's, the centre of interest.

In a previous chapter we have traced the long series of Isaianic prophecies telling of what is coming upon Jerusalem: telling how she is to be invested, but not assaulted; besieged, but not taken: prophecies, growing ever brighter and brighter with the promise of a mysterious deliverance; a deliverance sudden and terrible, wrought by Jehovah Himself in behalf of His chosen city. The dark side of the picture has long engaged us: we have seen Judah ravaged, great loss of life inflicted on her people, captives innumerable carried away, Hezekiah's dominions diminished ever more and more until at last they are reduced to one single city, that city being closely hemmed in on every side by a numerous and well-disciplined army and its inhabitants threatened with death by starvation, so that, humanly speaking, it is a mere question of how soon she will be forced to capitulate. For Sennacherib, acting with habitual caution, is leaving hunger to do its own work. The fenced cities of Judah have been stormed one by one. Though strong fortresses, they were only small places. But Jerusalem is a city of considerable size, strongly fortified and strongly garrisoned, and at the same time crowded with fugitives. Clearly, in her case the policy of prudence called for investment rather than assault.

How long the besieging army compassed Jerusalem we cannot tell, but at any rate for some weeks, since Sennacherib says that he erected earthworks against the city and prevented all egress, which signifies that he surrounded it with a wall of circumvallation as foretold by Isaiah: a work which would occupy some considerable time. This interval, during which the Rabshakeh returned from Jerusalem, and found his master departed from Lachish and besieging Libnah, was brought to a close by the news that a second Egyptian army was advancing under Tirhakah king of Ethiopia. This led Sennacherib to seek to hasten matters by despatching a letter to Hezekiah, in which he pointed out the utter uselessness of his attempting to hold out any longer. We may reasonably suppose that along with this letter went directions to his generals to make preparations for an immediate assault. If so, there must have been seen from the walls of the besieged city a certain bustle and stir amongst the enemy on the day on which Sennacherib's letter was sent in to Hezekiah, and the well-trained eyes of the sentinels would not be slow to see and note this and to guess what was about to happen. Man's preparations were visible, they could not well be otherwise; but the workings of the Divine Power were all unseen.

It was on the night, then, of that eventful day on which Hezekiah received the haughty Assyrian's letter, and going up into the temple spread it before Jehovah entreating His interposition, that the fatal blow was dealt: dealt by the hand of the great God Himself. "Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword not of man: and the sword, not of man, shall devour him." How sudden was the blow! How terrible the overthrow! How swift the deliverance! "At eventide behold terror; and before the morning they are not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us."[1]

"Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strewn."

"The sword of the Lord is filled with blood":[2] "the sword of the Lord, even pestilence," as in the days of David.[3] *Then* the blow fell upon the Chosen People, but *now* upon their foes:

"For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!"

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[1] Isa. xvii. 14.

[2] Isa. xxxiv. 6.

[3] 1 Chron. xxi. 12.

Pestilence had wrought havoc in Assyrian armies before the days of Sennacherib. In the Eponym Calendar we read under the date 803 B.C. "To the sea-coast. Pestilence." And again, in 765, "To the land of Hadrach. Pestilence." Pestilence, lit. "mortal disease" *mutanu*,[1] is thus mentioned, apparently as putting an end to military campaigns: but never, we may well believe, was there such a pestilence as this. "The angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning"—when the besieged rose with the early dawn, expecting the first day of fierce conflict with the foe—"behold, they were all dead corpses." The same thing happened as in the days of old, when "Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore." "The pestilence that walketh in darkness" had done its deadly work. It might have happened easily enough, so one thinks, in the streets of crowded Jerusalem, but Jehovah ordained that it should happen in the ranks of her foes. The number who perished was large indeed: 185,000. Between twice and thrice the number who perished by the pestilence in the days of David. Now it has been said, possibly with some truth, that Assyrian armies did not reach such a high figure. There is no need, however, for us to suppose that the force which marched out from Nineveh amounted to anything like that number; but on reaching Palestine they would be joined by contingents from the province of Samaria and from those states which at the last moment had sent in their allegiance to Sennacherib at Ushû.[2] Besides these, there would be deserters, such as the Arab mercenaries and the picked soldiers who fell away from Hezekiah. Add, further, that host of waverers who are always ready to join the winning side, as well as a goodly multitude of camp followers and persons drawn to the spot by mercenary motives or in the hope of witnessing the expected assault upon the fortress, and we shall find no difficulty in believing that the army which had now been before Jerusalem for some weeks had swelled to that vast extent. It may well have been, then, that the very vastness of this assemblage, coupled with the summer heat and the drinking and carousals which we may suppose to have taken place on that fatal night to celebrate the commencement of active operations on the morrow, all helped to increase the virulence of that terrible epidemic. But in reckoning thus we must never lose sight of the supernatural character of the visitation; for by the heathen, as well as by the Jews, it was long so regarded. In this way Isaiah's words in the oracle addressed to Ethiopia received an ample fulfilment: "All ye inhabitants of the world and ye dwellers on the earth, when an ensign is lifted up on the mountains, see ye; and when the trumpet is blown, hear ye."

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[1] The same word is used for pestilence in the Targum of Onkelos in Lev. xxvi. 25; Deut. xxviii. 21.

[2] See Chapter XVII, p. 187.

That the above call to the world at large should find a place in an oracle addressed more especially to the Ethiopian-Egyptian power is most suitable, for Egypt was the intended goal of Sennacherib's campaign and the country most deeply interested. It is from Egypt, then, that we obtain a most curious and interesting confirmation of the great disaster which brought about so glorious a deliverance. The old Greek historian, Herodotus, who loves to record all that is marvellous and strange, visited Egypt about two and a half centuries after the overthrow of Sennacherib's army. Herodotus, after mentioning a blind king, in whose reign Egypt was invaded by the Ethiopian Sabacos, *i.e.* Shabaka, continues thus: "The next king, I was told, was a priest of Hephaestus [1] called Sethos. This monarch despised and neglected the warrior class of the Egyptians, as though he did not need their services. Among other indignities which he offered them, he took from them the lands which they had possessed under all the previous kings, consisting of twelve acres of choice land for each warrior. Afterwards, therefore, when Sennacherib, king of the Arabians and Assyrians, marched his vast army into Egypt, the warriors one and all refused to come to his aid. On this the monarch, greatly distressed, entered into the inner sanctuary, and before the image of the god bewailed the fate which impended over him. As he wept he fell asleep, and dreamed that the god came and stood at his side, bidding him be of good cheer, and go forth boldly to meet the Arabian host, which would do him no hurt, as he himself would send those who should help him. Sethos, then, relying on the dream, collected such of the Egyptians as were willing to follow him, who were none of them warriors, but traders, artisans, and market people, and with these marched to Pelusium, which commands the entrance into Egypt, and there pitched his camp. As the two armies lay here opposite to one another, there came in the night a multitude of field mice, which devoured all the quivers and bowstrings of the enemy, and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their flight, and great multitudes fell as they had no arms with which to defend themselves. There stands to this day in the temple of Hephaestus, a stone statue of Sethos with a mouse in his hand, and an inscription to this effect: 'Look on me and learn to reverence the gods.' Thus far I have spoken on the authority of the Egyptians and their priests." [1]

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[1] The Vulcan of the Romans, to be identified with the Egyptian Phtah, the god of weapons.

The chief points in which the above account agrees with the Biblical record are as follows:

(i) A great disaster happens to an army of Sennacherib.
(ii) This disaster happens in a single night.
(iii) It is emphasised as a Divine interposition, obtained by a king, who in dire distress goes into a temple to obtain the help of his god.

And the points of difference are these:

(i) The scene of the disaster which was to bring deliverance is laid in Egypt. The king is an Egyptian king: the god an Egyptian god, apparently Phtah, the god of Memphis.
(ii) The agency employed is not an angel, but field mice.
(iii) The city rescued is not Jerusalem, but Pelusium on the Palestinian frontier of Egypt.

Now which of these stories is the true one? This is a most important question, deeply affecting the veracity of Holy Scripture. It is a question, too, on which critics have been divided. Who, then, will come to our help? A most unexpected ally: Sennacherib himself. In the Egyptian story, the monarch's distress is attributed to his being deserted by his proper army. According to Sennacherib it was Hezekiah who was thus deserted, not the Egyptian king. The record runs thus: "*The Arabs and his trusty warriors, whom he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, fell away.*" [2] Add to this, that Sennacherib's account speaks only of Hezekiah and Jerusalem, and says nothing whatever about the Egyptian king and Pelusium. The story told to Herodotus is further negatived by the Assyrian king's statement that he was met by an Egyptian army of bowmen and chariotry at Eltekeh, evidently a trained force and no mere gathering of peaceful civilians. The differences between Herodotus' story and the Scripture account have, however, led some critics to suppose that the former must relate to a second campaign, undertaken during those eight closing years of Sennacherib of which we know nothing. But this, again, is most unlikely, since it would be an equally strange thing if in a second campaign there happened at Pelusium a repetition of what had previously happened at Jerusalem in 701 B.C., viz., a king deserted by his army, going into the temple of his god to entreat divine assistance, and receiving an astonishing deliverance just when matters had reached a climax. It appears, then, that the story told to Herodotus was a fabrication, closely moulded on what happened, not at Pelusium, but at Jerusalem; and that it should be so is no surprise, for Herodotus tells us that he heard it "*on the authority of the Egyptians and their priests.*"

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[1] Hdt. ii. 141–142.

[2] Taylor Cylinder, col. iii. 31–33.

With regard to the second point, viz., that in the Egyptian story the field mice take the place of the angel of the Lord in the Hebrew records, the difference is only an apparent one, for both accounts point unmistakably to pestilence as the natural agency employed. In the first place, it is an established fact that the rat family, of which mice form a branch, are conveyers of pestilence. Thus, a correspondent writes me word that in February 1901, when a bubonic plague was raging in Cape Town, a doctor who was attending the patients assured him that the plague had been brought from Bombay by infected rats on board a vessel. That bubonic plague was conveyed by mice, was a fact which came within the experience of the ancients, and hence the mouse was regarded by them as a symbol of pestilence. In 1 Sam. vi. we are told that when a plague was raging in Philistia, the country was at the same time infested with swarms of field mice, and that the trespass-offering returned to the God of Israel, whose Ark had been carried into the country of the Philistines and who was rightly looked upon as the sender of the plague, consisted, according to a custom prevalent in antiquity, of golden models of the field mice as well as of the plague tumours. Similarly, in Homer's *Iliad*, Book i, Apollo, when sending a plague among the Greeks, is styled Apollo Smintheus: "Apollo the Mouse-god." In the next place, pestilence was regarded by the ancients as the work of a god. This is clear, both from the account of the trespass-offering sent by the Philistines to the God of Israel as well as from the Homeric story of the plague sent by Apollo. Further, on the coins of Alexandria Troas we find Apollo depicted holding a mouse in his hand, like the statue shown to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests, which bore the inscription "Look on me and fear the gods," and which was in all probability a statue of the god Phtah. Like the Greeks and Egyptians, the Assyrians also had their god of pestilence, whom they styled Dibbara.[1] Dibbara is described as a warrior-god, and Ashurbanipal in his long inscription on the Rassam Cylinder tells us repeatedly how Dibbara helped him to overcome his enemies.[2] The Hebrews, better informed than their heathen neighbours, looked on the pestilence as the work of Jehovah, but inflicted by a warrior-angel. In the pestilence, sent as a punishment for David's sin in numbering the people, Ornan the Jebusite was allowed to see the destroying angel standing between earth and heaven with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem: 1 Chron. xxi. 16. That passage shows us that a blow, described by the Sacred Historian as the angel of Jehovah going forth to smite a hostile army, is best interpreted of the pestilence, which, as we have already seen, sometimes put a stop to Assyrian expeditions, for pestilence was not always on the side of the Assyrians as Ashurbanipal would have us believe. Lastly, that the Egyptian story told to Herodotus contained the truth partly wrapped up in figure—the mice being both symbols and propagators of pestilence—is rendered probable by the fact that other details of that story, as we have already seen, agree with the Scripture Record.

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[1] Cf. the Heb. *debher*, "pestilence."

[2] Rassam Cylinder, cols. iii. 126, 134; iv. 79; ix. 56, 82. The ideograph transcribed "Dibbara" is by some transcribed "Girra."

But it will, perhaps, be asked, Why do we not find any mention of the pestilence in the prophecies of Isaiah? Probably because the agency to be employed was not revealed to the prophet, and that for a very good reason, viz. to exercise men's faith that deliverance would come despite the seemingly hopeless outlook. Isaiah, in depicting the coming overthrow, uses as figures and symbols some of the weapons in the Divine arsenal, such as the flame of a devouring fire, thunder and lightning, storm and whirlwind, the rumble and shock of the earthquake, and so forth. All these are poetic images and need not surprise us. Isaiah is a poet as well as a prophet. Even had he known the agency to be used, it would have sounded far too prosy and matter-of-fact to mention the field mice. Such a detail suits well enough the historic record in the Books of Samuel, but would be quite incongruous with what Burns has so well described as "rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire."[1] Even in those psalms of praise which were written after the Great Deliverance we shall find no mention of the actual agent. We read of Jehovah's voice, of the ships of Tarshish being broken with the east wind, of Jacob's God with His covert in Salem and His lair in Zion returning glorious and excellent from the mountains of prey. But in this last figure it is the lion that comes before us, not the mouse. Still it remains true that

"By humblest agents will our God fulfil
His holy will."

No longer therefore now can we join the Roman poet in speaking of "ridiculus mus."[1] Rather must we change the epithet and say, in a sense far different from that intended by him,

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[1] See "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

"Parturiunt montes: nascetur *terribilis* mus";

for it is thus that Jehovah's threat is to be fulfilled, "I will break the Assyrian in my land and upon my mountains tread him under foot."[2] When the sun set on that last day of Jerusalem's investment, which of that starving multitude had any the least idea of the secret agency already working to effect their deliverance?

But what was it that drew the field mice to the Assyrian camp? Surely the abundant supplies to be there found. Sennacherib sought to starve Jerusalem into surrender: the Rabshakeh's coarse taunt points that way. He was now to see his own army the victims of their abundant commissariat. That very abundance both attracted the mice and rendered his overfed army an easy prey to pestilence.

But the matter-of-fact reader will certainly ask, What about the statement of the Egyptian priests that the mice ate the bows, quivers, and shield-handles of the Assyrians? My answer is that the whole description is figurative and symbolical, the meaning being that the weapons of the Assyrians were rendered useless inasmuch as the men who wielded them lay prostrate in death. That mice should stop to gnaw leather and bow-strings when they had such abundance of richer food close at hand, seems to me out of the question.

We turn next to the pages of the Jewish historian Josephus. Josephus wrote about eight centuries after the invasion of Sennacherib, and his account of that invasion is based in great measure on the Old Testament story. After mentioning the letter sent by Sennacherib to Hezekiah, the Jewish king's prayer, and the reassuring answer received through the prophet Isaiah, Josephus continues his account thus:

"But after a while the king of Assyria, when he had failed of his treacherous designs against the Egyptians, returned home without success on the following occasion: He spent a long time on the siege of Pelusium; and when the banks that he had raised over against the walls were of a great height,[3] and when he was ready to make an immediate assault upon them, but heard that Tirhakah, king of the Ethiopians, was coming and bringing great forces to aid the Egyptians, and was resolved to march through the desert and so to fall directly upon the Assyrians, this king was disturbed at the news, and, as I said before, left Pelusium and returned back without success. Now, concerning this Sennacherib, Herodotus also says, in the Second Book of his Histories, how this king came against the Egyptian king, who was the priest of Vulcan; and that, as he was besieging Pelusium, he broke up the siege on the following occasion: This Egyptian priest prayed to God, and God heard his prayer, and sent a judgment upon the Arabian king. (But in this Herodotus was mistaken, when he called the king, not king of the Assyrians, but of the Arabians.) And he adds that a multitude of mice gnawed to pieces in one night both the bows and the rest of the armour of the Assyrians; and that it was on that account that the king, when he had no bows left, drew off his army from Pelusium. And Herodotus does indeed give us this history; nay, and Berosus, who wrote of the affairs of Chaldea, makes mention of this king Sennacherib, and that he ruled over the Assyrians, and that he made an expedition against all Asia and Egypt; and says thus":

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[1] Horace, *Ars Poetica.*

[2] Isa. xiv. 25.

[3] These "banks," or siege-works, must be distinguished from the "banks," or paved ways, mentioned in 2 Kings xix. 32, A.V., up which, as shown in the Lachish bas-relief, the battering-rams were brought to play on the town wall.

These words, "and says thus," not being found in all copies, it is best to suppose that the extract from Berosùs has dropped out, and to regard as Josephus' own words the remainder of the passage, which agrees closely with the Scripture account and runs thus:

"Now, when Sennacherib was returning from the Egyptian war to Jerusalem, he found his army under Rabshakeh his general in danger by a plague, for God had sent a pestilential distemper upon his army, and on the very first night of the siege, a hundred fourscore and five thousand, with their captains and generals, were destroyed. So the king was in a great dread, and in a terrible agony at this calamity; and being in great fear for his whole army, he fled with the rest of his forces to his own kingdom and to his city Nineveh; and when he had abode there a little while, he was treacherously assaulted and died by the hands of his elder sons, Adrammelech and Seraser, and was slain in his own temple which was called Araske. Now these sons of his were driven away by the citizens on account of the murder of their father, and went into Armenia, while Assarachoddas (Esarhaddon) took the kingdom of Sennacherib. And this proved to be the conclusion of the Assyrian expedition against the people of Jerusalem."

In studying the above extract, the first thing that strikes us is, that when dealing with the miraculous part of the story, Josephus appeals to the testimony of heathen writers before appealing to the records of his own people. The reason is, that he is writing for the Gentile world. Therefore, when dealing with a story bordering on the miraculous, he very naturally seeks to corroborate it in part with outside testimony from Egypt and Babylonia through the histories of Herodotus and Berosus respectively (notice the emphasis which lies in those words, "*Herodotus does indeed say this*"). Then, without in any way contravening their statements, he goes on to give the story contained in the Hebrew Sacred Records.

But though Josephus does not contravene, it is observable that in dealing with Herodotus' story he makes certain additions, perhaps unconsciously. For instance he tells us that Sennacherib spent a long time over the siege of Pelusium, and that he was just about to start active operations when the news of Tirhakah's advance obliged him to desist. Here, indeed, he adopts a detail taken from the Scripture narrative: see 2 Kings xix. 9. But what shall we say as to his statement that Sennacherib raised banks over against Pelusium? We may say this, that Sennacherib's own account is that he raised the banks, not against Pelusium, but against Jerusalem. Speaking of Hezekiah, his words are "*I placed bulwarks round about against him.*" But whence did Josephus get this added detail? He could not have got it from the inscriptions of Sennacherib, which in his days had long lain buried in the ground. Did he unconsciously take it from the prophecy against Ariel in Isa. xxix. 3? If so, he has transferred to Pelusium what was predicted concerning Jerusalem, a prediction which, as Sennacherib's words show, was duly fulfilled.

With regard to the Chaldean historian Berosus, who flourished about the time of Alexander the Great, we learn from Josephus that Berosus speaks of Sennacherib's expedition as directed in part against Egypt. This is important, for it can be shown from contemporary Babylonian inscriptions that Berosus is a most trustworthy historian.[1] All the more, therefore, must we regret that the extract from this author, which Josephus was about to quote, has fallen out. Still those brief words, "Nay and Berosus," assure us that, after quoting Herodotus, Josephus was about to give further evidence from the pages of Berosus of some disaster having befallen the arms of Sennacherib; a disaster which the Chaldeans, as age-long enemies of the Assyrians, would be only too glad to record.

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[1] In extracts from his Chaldean History, quoted by Josephus, he gives correctly the lengths of the reigns of the kings of the New Babylonian Empire, and mentions Nebuchadnezzar's adorning the temples of Babylon and enlarging that city, as well as his erecting a new palace adjoining that of his father within the space of fifteen days. See the *Antiquities*, x, 11. 1 and *Apion*, i, 19, 20.

After thus bringing forward the Egyptian and Chaldean stories, Josephus turns to the records of his own people. Guided doubtless by 2 Sam. xxiv., he interprets the destruction inflicted by the angel of the Lord as the pestilence, and regards the fatal night, mentioned in 2 Kings xix. 35, as the first night of the siege, *i.e.*—according to the Jewish mode of reckoning—the night before the day on which active operations were to begin. The terror-stricken flight of Sennacherib—likely enough in itself—he borrows, may be, from Isa. xxxi. 9: " his rock shall pass away by reason of terror "; while the very brevity of the Sacred Record has led him to imagine, as many have since done, that Sennacherib died very shortly after his return to Nineveh. It escaped him that in the short notice, "*dwelt* at Nineveh," the historian makes use of a verb of continuance.

One other point calls for a short notice. Josephus very naturally demurs to the Egyptian informants of Herodotus styling Sennacherib "king of the Arabians." Some light is thrown on this by the earliest inscription of Sennacherib, in which he tells us that in his Babylonian campaign in 703 B.C., two years before his invasion of Judah, he captured the allied armies of Merodachbaladan under his stepson, and of the queen of Arabia under her brother; also, that he carried captive the Arabs, Arameans, and Chaldeans, from certain Babylonian cities:[1] so that this mention of Sennacherib as "king of the Arabians" does not require us to refer the story of the Egyptian priests to a supposed second invasion of Judah subsequent to Sennacherib's invasion of Arabia in 690 B.C.

We may now turn to evidence of quite a different sort bearing on the reality of the disaster which befell the army of Sennacherib before the walls of Jerusalem. History, however clear and circumstantial, may easily be falsified or have a wrong colouring given to it. But when we come to songs of praise for a great and amazing deliverance, poured forth from hearts overflowing with gratitude, the case is different. Clearly something must have happened to call forth those songs. There must have been some basis of historical fact on which they are founded. Take, for instance, Pss. xlvi. xlviii. and lxxvi. When we look into these grand lyrics, how strikingly suitable do they appear as poetic descriptions of the Assyrian's overthrow! In all three Zion is the scene of some great deliverance, wrought for her by her God. In Ps. xlviii. she is described as "the city of our God," "the city of the Great King." In Ps. xlvi. the Psalmist sees her firm and unmoved in the midst of the mightiest convulsions. She has nought to fear, for within her walls, all unknown to the foe, is a gladdening stream, her waters are "sure,"[1] those "waters of Shiloah that go softly,"[2] apt type of "that peace which the world cannot give." Nay, better still,

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[1] See *The First Campaign of Sennacherib* by Sidney Smith: lines 28 and 52 of the inscription.

> "God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved;
> God shall help her, at the dawn of morning."[3]

Thus sings the poet; as though the prophet's prediction had already received a glorious fulfilment: "At eventide behold terror; *and* before the morning they are not."[4]

In Ps. xlviii. when the crisis has thus suddenly passed away, the Psalmist bids the citizens of Zion, so long cooped up within her walls, go forth to "tell her towers" and "mark well her bulwarks." Not one stone has been dislodged, not one turret shaken. Round those walls but lately marched the armies of the allied kings, combining to form the vast host of that great potentate who makes the proud boast, "Are not my princes all of them kings?"[5] The poet sees this martial pageant, and with poetic license goes on to describe the coming overthrow:

> "For, lo, the kings assembled themselves,
> They passed by together:
> They, even they,[6] saw: Forthwith[6] they were amazed,
> They were dismayed, they were stricken with terror."[7]

"They saw": we are not told what they saw. To make his description more effective the poet leaves us to guess that from the context. They saw a sight which was to prove death to many of them: "the city of the Great King," the city of Him "whose fire is in Zion and his furnace in Jerusalem,"[8] and who will show Himself stronger than Assyria's "great king."[9]

It is, however, the last of these three psalms, Ps. lxxvi., entitled in the Septuagint "respecting the Assyrian," which especially emphasises the actual scene of the overthrow and is at the same time the most suggestive as to the agency employed. To credit the Pelusium story any longer with the following before our eyes seems well-nigh impossible:

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[1] Isa. xxxiii. 16.
[2] Isa. viii. 6.
[3] Heb. R.V.M.
[4] Isa. xvii. 14.
[5] Isa. x. 8.
[6] The pronoun is emphatic, see Perowne's *Psalms*; and also with regard to the word rendered "forthwith."
[7] R.V.M.
[8] Isa. xxxi. 9.
[9] Isa. xxxvi. 4.

"In Judah is God known:
His name is great in Israel.
In Salem also is his covert,[1]
And his lair in Zion.[1]
There brake he the arrows of the bow;
The shield, and the sword, and the battle.
Glorious art thou and excellent, from the mountains of prey.
The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep;
And none of the men of might have found their hands.
At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep."

It appears, then, beyond all doubt, that Jerusalem was the scene of the Great Deliverance. The prophecies of Isaiah, the historic records of the Old Testament, and the psalms of praise at which we have been looking, all point the same way. But the strongest evidence after all is that supplied by the striking reticence of Sennacherib's own account. The Assyrian, as might be expected, says nothing about any reverse overtaking his army. He can admit his plans being frustrated by the weather in a campaign against Elam undertaken somewhat later in the season,[2] but not the destruction of his army by pestilence before the walls of Jerusalem, just when he was on the point of seizing the prey. Yet, if we read between the lines, it becomes quite clear that at Jerusalem he has received some mysterious check. This is very happily expressed by an eloquent French writer, whose words deserve to be quoted. Commenting on the record inscribed on the Cylinder, he observes, "Sennakhérib n'avoue pas qu'il a subi un echec devant Jerusalem, mais son langage est plein de reticences. Notons en particulier, cette phrase etonnante 'Je le renfermai luimême comme un oiseau en cage en milieu de Jerusalem, sa ville royale.' Chose significative, il ne dit pas qu'il ouvrit la cage et saisit l'oiseau; et s'il ne le dit pas, nous pouvons être assurés qu'il ne le fit pas."[3]

Our subject has led us back to the Assyrian's own record.

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[1] The Hebrew words rendered "tabernacle" and "dwelling-place" in the R.V. may severally be rendered "covert" and "lair": cf. Pss. x. 9, and civ. 22. Jehovah is thus compared to a lion, as in Isa. xxxi. 4—a remarkable parallel to the opening verses of this psalm—and "the mountains of prey" are the hills round Jerusalem, where He pounces on His foes.

[2] "I gave the order to march against Madaktu, his royal city. The month of rain with extreme cold set in, and the heavy storms poured down rain upon rain and snow. I was afraid of the torrents coming down the mountain slopes; the front of my yoke I turned about and took the road to Nineveh." Taylor Cyl. iv. 74–79.

[3] *La campagne de Sennakhérib en Palestine*, by Georges Martin: Montauban, 1892.

There are two passages, one at the opening and the other at the close of that recital, which call for our notice. The record opens with the words "In my third campaign I marched to the Hittite land," *i.e.* to Syria. Yet in Scripture, as well as in Herodotus and Josephus, Egypt is regarded as the goal aimed at. Why, then, does Sennacherib leave Egypt unmentioned? Because he never got there. If he had said "I marched to the land of Egypt," he would have told a lie. If he had said "I set out for Egypt," he would have been compelled to make a tacit admission of failure. He therefore quietly lets his readers imagine that the "Hittite land" was his intended goal, and that he successfully accomplished the task which he had set before him.

The second passage, which comes at the close of the recital, describes Hezekiah's submission—recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 14—and the tribute sent by him to the conqueror on that occasion. As it is of considerable importance I give it in full.

"As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendour of my majesty overwhelmed him, and the Arabs and his picked troops, which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted. In addition to 30 talents of gold, and 800 talents of silver, he caused to be brought after me to Nineveh, my royal city, jewels, gems, *daggassi*, large lapis-lazuli stones, couches of ivory, thrones of ivory, elephant-hide, elephant-tooth, ebony, boxwood, valuable treasures of all kinds, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians. To present the tribute and to pay homage he despatched his messenger."

It has been inferred from the above that after Sennacherib left Palestine Jerusalem surrendered to his generals, who brought away with them the tribute described. But this inference is negatived by the canon just quoted, "s'il ne le dit pas, nous pouvons être assurés qu'il ne le fit pas." If Sennacherib had ever got inside Jerusalem, either in person or by his generals, we should have been sure to hear of it. How, then, are we to understand the statement that the tribute was sent after him to Nineveh—for the happy mention of the 30 talents of gold assures us that the reference is to the same tribute which the record of 2 Kings xviii. 14–16 represents as having been sent by Hezekiah to the Assyrian king, apparently while he was still before Lachish?[1] The following explanation seems to me a highly probable one. On his return to Nineveh the Assyrian must have felt the advisability of doing all he could to hide from his subjects the terrible and mysterious reverse which had overtaken his arms. It must, then, have struck him that the best way to do this would be to arrange that shortly after his arrival at the capital the Jewish tribute-bearers should make their appearance, bringing with them the costly tribute described above. They would no doubt be led into the royal presence after having received directions how to act their part, and, making obeisance to the Great King, would present to him the gifts sent by their master. A sight must thus have been witnessed at Nineveh similar to that portrayed on the Lachish bas-relief, only much more imposing, seeing that the tribute included certain royal ladies, to wit Hezekiah's own daughters. This would serve to show the multitude that in spite of any sinister reports of some disaster having happened to that part of the Assyrian army, which was supposed to have been intentionally left behind in Judah, Hezekiah had deemed it wisest to send in his allegiance to the Assyrian general left in command. In this way the terrible overthrow of the host investing Jerusalem would as much as possible be hidden from the popular view, and the impression would be given that the recent campaign in the West, from which the king had been called away by more pressing business, had at length been brought to a successful conclusion by those whom he had left in charge on the spot. It only needs to be added that in sending his daughters Hezekiah gave a strong proof of his wish to take up the position of a vassal ally of the Assyrian king. Ashurbanipal in his inscriptions describes the kings of Tyre, Arvad, and Cilicia as acting in a similar way.[1] It must, then, have been a terrible blow to the Jewish monarch when the Assyrian, by demanding the surrender of Jerusalem, showed that, so far from accepting the proposed alliance, he designed either to make Judah into an Assyrian province or at any rate to set over it a nominee of his own.

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[1] In 2 Kings xviii. 14 only 300 talents of silver are mentioned as against the 800 mentioned by Sennacherib. It has been conjectured that the Hebrew and Phoenician silver talent stood in value to the Babylonian in the proportion of 8 to 3. Thus the statement of Sennacherib would be in substantial agreement with that found in the Biblical record.

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[1] Cf. Ps. xlv. 9, where the daughters of allied kings occupy a similar position at the court of Solomon.

CHAPTER XXIV

SENNACHERIB

> "Out of the eater came forth meat,
> And out of the strong came forth sweetness."
> JUDGES xiv. 14.

IN my last chapter, when examining the accounts of the siege of Jerusalem, I was twice able to obtain very valuable assistance from the inscriptions of Sennacherib. Not yet, however, have we extracted all the sweetness that is to be got from the carcase of the old Assyrian lion, and in the present chapter I hope, not only to obtain a further supply, but to exhibit this strange paradox, that our sweetness comes out of his bitterness, our honey out of his gall. This will very naturally lead us on to consider the character of Sennacherib, and the close of the chapter will be devoted to illustrating the Scripture statement that on his return home he "dwelt at Nineveh," and perished finally by the hands of two of his sons.

The Taylor Cylinder, to which reference has so often been made, is justly called the Standard Inscription of Sennacherib. It might also be called the Royal Inscription, or the State Inscription, for it records only those campaigns which were undertaken by the king in person. It is written on a six-sided terra-cotta prism, 14½ inches long, with a breadth of 3⅜ inches for each of the sides, and comprises no less than 487 lines of cuneiform writing, which give us a record of the first fourteen years of the reign, to wit eight royal campaigns, including the famous 3rd campaign in Syria and Palestine. The last 51 lines are devoted to a description of Sennacherib's armoury. A translation of this valuable inscription by Prof. R. W. Rogers will be found in *Records of the Past*, New Series, vol. vi, published by Bagster. The cylinder, which is now in the British Museum, was discovered by Col. Taylor at Kouyunjik (Nineveh) in the year 1830. The inscription on it was written in the eponymy of Bel-imur-ani, 691 B.C., soon after the battle of Khalulē, the last historical event recorded on it. A second edition, drawn up two years later, but carrying the history of the reign no further, is now in the possession of the University of

Chicago.[1] From Kouyunjik were also obtained the four slabs known as the Bull Inscriptions of Sennacherib, so called from their having been sawn off the sides of colossal bulls. These at present occupy a somewhat dark and unfrequented nook of the British Museum, at the east end of the Assyrian Transept. Another monument of the reign, known as the Memorial Tablet or Nebi Yunas Inscription, was found in the Nebi Yunus mound at Kouyunjik during excavations undertaken by the Turkish Government, and is now in the Imperial Museum at Constantinople. There are other inscriptions of Sennacherib which call for the attention of the Biblical student, notably the Bavian Inscription which has already been referred to in connection with the fall of Babylon, and the inscription known as B.M. 103,000, which will be of great use to us when we go on to consider how Sennacherib "dwelt at Nineveh."

In the inscription on the Taylor Cylinder, from which we are now to extract the honey, reference is made to no fewer than twenty-five royal personages, the greater number being mentioned by name. Of these twenty-five persons, twenty-three receive the title of *sharru* "king," viz.

† 1. Mar-duk-apal-iddina (Merodach-baladan) of Kar-Dunyash, i. 19,20.[2]
† 2. Ispabara of Ellipi, ii. 8, 9.
† 3. Lulî (Elulaeus) of Sidon, ii. 35.
4. Minkhimmu (Menahem) of Samsimuruna.
5. Tubahlu (Ethbaal) of Sidon.
6. Abdilihti of Arvad.
7. Urumilki of Gebal (Byblos).
8. Mitinti of Ashdod.
9. Buduilu of Beth-Ammon.
10. Kammusu-nadab of Moab.
11. Malik-rammu of Edom.

"Kings of Amurru (the Amorite-land), all of them," ii. 47–55.

† 12. Tsidqa (Zedekiah) of Ashkelon, ii. 58.
13. Sharru-ludari of Ashkelon, ii. 62.
14. Padi of Ekron, ii. 70, iii. 7, 8, 25.
† 15. The King of Egypt, ii. 80.
† 16. The King of Melukhkhi, ii. 81.
17. Tsil-Bel of Gaza, iii. 25, 26.
† 18. The King of Elam (Shutruk-Nakhkhunte II), iii. 62.
† 19. Maniae of Ukku, iv. 2, 3.

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[1] For a cuneiform transcript of this with transliteration and translation see Luckenbill's *Annals of Sennacherib*, published by the University of Chicago Press, August, 1924.

[2] The references are to the columns and lines of the inscription.

† 20. The King of Elam (Khallutush-In-Shushinak II), iv. 30, 40.

† 21. The King of Elam (Kutir-Nakhkhunte II), iv. 80–v. 1.

† 22. The King of Elam (Humbanimena), v. 21, 70, vi. 14, 15.

† 23. Shuzub the Chaldean (Mushezib-Marduk) King of Babylon, v. 41, vi. 15.

The title is thus distributed alike to friend and foe, for out of the above twenty-three persons twelve come before us as the enemies of Assyria,[1] and some of them very bitter enemies, as for instance Merodach-baladan, the four successive kings of Elam, and above all the Chaldean prince, Mushezib-Marduk, styled on the Cylinder "Shuzub the Chaldean," who sat on the throne of Babylon for the four years 692–688 B.C. For this person Sennacherib can find no language contemptuous enough. He is described as "a weakling hero, who had no knees, a slave, subject to the governor of the city of Lakhiru," around whom "gathered the fugitive Arameans, the run-away, the murderer, the robber."[2] And yet out of four times this Shuzub is mentioned he is twice styled "king."[3]

To two persons only the royal title is denied. First, to Hezekiah king of Judah, an hereditary prince, descended from a long line of royal ancestors, sufficiently powerful to head a hostile confederacy, and the ruler—as Sennacherib himself admits in the Nebi Yunas Inscription—of a "wide territory," a territory which possessed no fewer than forty-six strongholds, so well fortified that it taxed the skill of the Assyrian army to capture them; a territory, too, so populous that over 200,000 captives were led away from it to Assyria. The campaign against this powerful prince occupies no less than 77 lines out of the 419 devoted to the history of the reign, *i.e.* 1½ times the average number of lines for a single campaign, and he is mentioned by name no less than three times, *i.e.* as often as the name of any other royal person occurs throughout the inscription on the Cylinder, yet in every case the royal title is denied him: twice he is "Hezekiah of Judah,"[4] once simply "Hezekiah,"[5] whilst in a fourth instance, where we might expect the name, a personal pronoun is deemed sufficient.[6] Further, this omission of the title *sharru* "king" is rendered more significant by the fact that Jerusalem is nevertheless twice called *makhaz sharrutishu* "his royal city."[7] It is as if in the rough copy submitted to him Sennacherib had deliberately struck out the royal title in the case of Hezekiah. Accordingly, in a translation of the Cylinder given in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, First Series, vol. xix. p. 135, the words *Khazaqiyau Yaudaai,* in col. ii. 71 and iii. 11–12 are in each case translated " Hezekiah king of Judah " ; and in a later and emended translation by the same eminent scholar, given in *Records of the Past,* First Series, vol. i, p. 33, despite many alterations and improvements, the royal title still survives.

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[1] Marked thus, †.

[2] Col. v. 8–11.

[3] In iii. 46 and v. 8 he appears without the royal title, in v. 41 and vi. 15 he is "king of Babylon."

[4] Col. ii. 72, and iii. 11, 12.

[5] Col. iii. 29.

[6] Col. iii. 20.

[7] Col. iii. 21, 32.

The belief that the omission of the title in Hezekiah's case was intentional is much strengthened when we come to consider the case of the only other person to whom it is denied, viz. " Shuzub of Babylon," mentioned in col. iv. 35 and v. 5. This Shuzub, whose full name was Nergal-yushezib the son of Gakhul,[1] appears from the Second Dynastic Tablet not to have been of royal birth, no dynasty being affixed to his name on that tablet.[2] The Babylonian Chronicle informs us that he was set on the throne of Babylon in 693 B.C. by Khallushu king of Elam in the place of Ashur-nadin-shum, Sennacherib's eldest son, whom Khallushu carried off to Elam.[3] It is, then, perfectly clear that Sennacherib's feelings must have been very strong against this man, who was only a commoner and yet had supplanted his own eldest son on the throne of the ancient sacred city. Hence we are not surprised to learn that after a short reign of eighteen months " Shuzub of Babylon " was captured alive in battle by the Assyrians, thrown into chains, and carried away to Assyria,[4] his ultimate fate being thus described by the exasperated foe : " At the central gate of Nineveh I tied him up like a pig." [5]

It would seem, then, that in the case of Shuzub Sennacherib had a reason for omitting the title. He would not call that man " king " who had taken the place of his eldest son on the throne of Babylon. There was also a reason in the case of Hezekiah, who had a much better claim to the title of " king " than Shuzub of Babylon. Let us make the dead Sennacherib confess what that reason was ; for in his inscriptions " he, being dead, yet speaketh," and in his speaking he unconsciously lets out the truth. In strong contrast to the way in which Hezekiah is spoken of in the Standard Inscription, is the brief record which meets us in Bulls 1, 2, and 3 :

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[1] Nebi Yunas Inscription, line 28. For an English translation of this inscription see Luckenbill, pp. 85–89.

[2] *Records of the Past,* New Series, vol. i, p. 18.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 25–26.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 26. See Layard's *Monuments of Nineveh,* vol. i, pl. 64, for a bas-relief depicting the horse of Nergal-yushezib falling in battle.

[5] Nebi Yunas Inscription, lines 34–36.

"I devastated the wide district of Judah. The strong, proud Hezekiah, its king, I brought in submission to my feet." "*The strong, proud Hezekiah, its king*": how surely does Sennacherib here let the cat out of the bag! He will not allow Hezekiah the title "king" on the inscription submitted to him for his approval, because Hezekiah has turned out to be too strong for him. He, "the first among all princes, the powerful one who consumes the unsubmissive, who strikes the wicked with the thunderbolt," whose "warfare strong[1] kings feared,"[2] has found in Hezekiah of Judah a "strong[1] king" who has been able to baffle him. He shut up the bird in a cage, but he could not take it out. Yet that is only the smaller part of his trouble: he has lost half his army before the walls of Hezekiah's "royal city!" This sense of loss must have added greatly to his mortification, and the two working together would lead him, we may well suppose, to strike out the royal title in the case of Hezekiah of Judah in the copy submitted to him.

If the record on the Cylinder, when thus searchingly examined, is suggestive of some reverse to the Assyrian arms in Sennacherib's campaign against Hezekiah, the bas-reliefs have also something to say as to his failure to capture Jerusalem. Frequent reference has already been made to that famous bas-relief, the storming of Lachish, which so awoke the admiration of its discoverer, Sir A. H. Layard. "The whole power of the Great King," writes Layard, adopting the language of the Chronicler when writing on the same subject[3]—"the whole power of the Great King seems to have been called forth to take this stronghold. In no other sculpture were so many armed warriors seen drawn up in array before a besieged city." What was the motive which led to the execution of this celebrated monument? May it not have been this: a wish on the part of Sennacherib to represent the campaign in Judah as a success, or at any rate to hide its failure? Now the cautious monarch knows quite well that in some cases this can better be done by pictures than by words. There is no need for a detailed account of the siege of Lachish in the royal annals, seeing that it is only the few who can read the difficult cuneiform characters.[4] A picture with short explanatory epigraphs will serve the purpose better. We have, then, only to imagine a party of provincial governors and foreign notables, or possibly of simple townsfolk, being conducted over the palace and standing before that bas-relief in rapt admiration. What a grand battle-piece! A strong city on its lofty *tell*, needing no outer bulwark, yet surrounded with double fortress-walls, is seen to be assaulted by the Great King "with all his power." Slingers, archers, spearmen, battering-rams, and scaling-ladders—all are there; and there in great force. So severe is the contest, so numerous the combatants, so animated the whole scene, that, as we look at it, the din and uproar of battle seems, as it were, to rise from the silent stone. Before such an assault even the strongest city must fall; and that such is to be the fate of the fortress is told by the inset in the middle of the picture.[1] But, pray what city is this? and who is its proud conqueror? The guide bids his audience face round to the right, where the scene, too big for one side of the chamber, is continued on the end wall, and pointing to Sennacherib seated on his throne amid the vine-clad hills of Judah and receiving with much state and ceremony the captives and spoil of Lachish, reads aloud in stentorian tones:

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[1] The adjective is the same in both passages.

[2] Taylor Cylinder, col. i. 7–9 and 16.

[3] Cf. 2 Chron. xxxii. 9, "now he was before Lachish, and all his power with him." "Power," Heb. *memshalah* = "display of might" (Francis Brown, Heb. Lex.). Could any word better describe the scene on the bas-relief?

[4] Delitzsch in his *Assyrian Grammar* presents the learner with 273 cuneiform signs. King in his *Easy Lessons in the Cuneiform Inscriptions* offers the beginner 300.

Sin-akhê-eriba shar kishshati shar Ashshur
ina kussi nimedi ushib-ma
shallat Lakisu
makharshu etiq

i.e. "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria,
sat on a chair of state, and
the spoil of Lachish
passed before him."

He next reads the epigraph over the royal pavilion, which stands just behind the throne:

zaratum
sha Sin-akhê-eriba
shar Ashshur

i.e "Tent
of Sennacherib,
king of Assyria."

And lastly, after facing his audience once more to the right, the epigraph over the very interesting picture of the fortified camp at Lachish:

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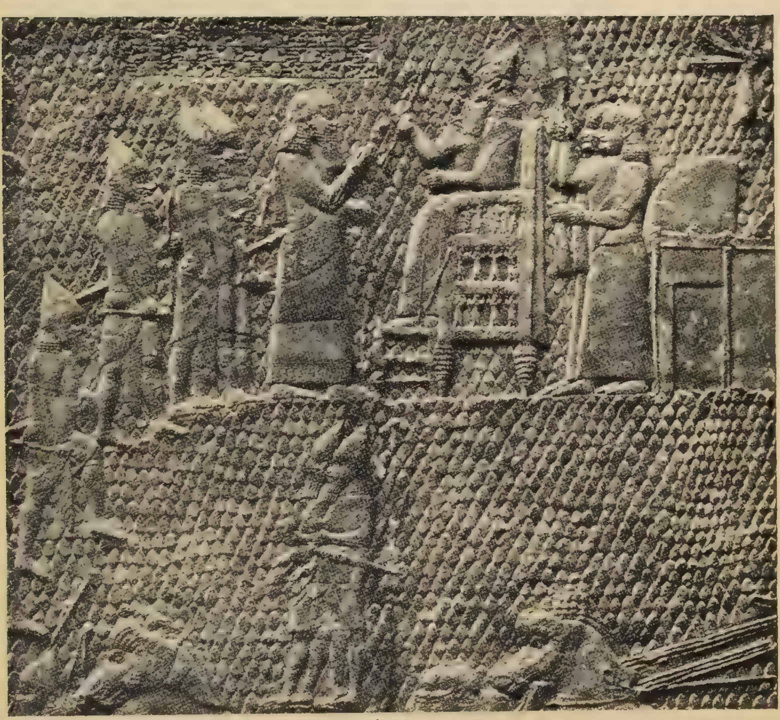
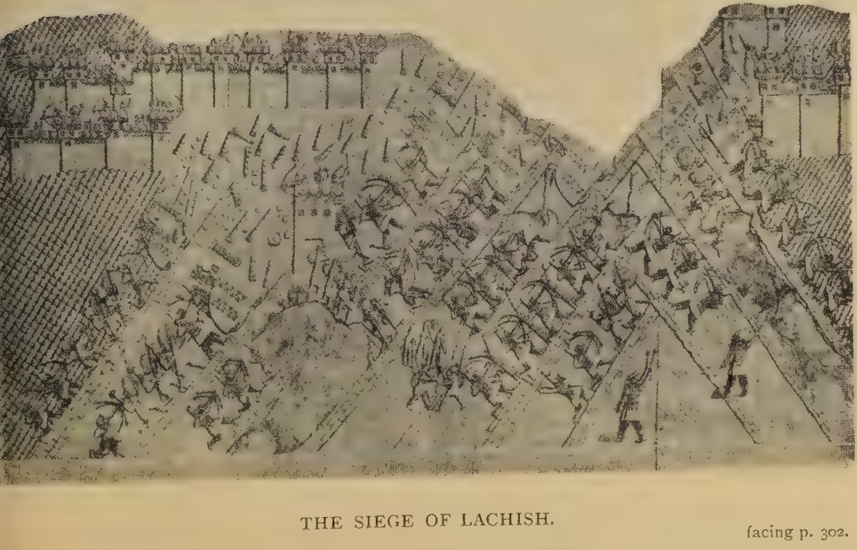
[1] See Chapter XVIII, p. 212.



SENNACHERIB ON HIS THRONE BEFORE LACHISH.



THE SIEGE OF LACHISH.

facing p. 302.

Ushmannu sha Sin-akhê-eriba
shar Ashshur
i.e. "Camp of Sennacherib,
king of Assyria." [1]

The Lachish bas-reliefs in the upper part of the Assyrian Saloon at the British Museum, occupy twelve sections, numbered 21 to 32, and cover approximately 13+6+3=22 yards of wall. They display Lachish and the Assyrian army making the attack, the spoil being carried off, rebels tortured, and prisoners led before Sennacherib sitting in state. Behind the king is his tent, and further back still his fortified camp; the evident intention being to make the most of the siege of Lachish.

The effect thus produced on the listening crowd is that the campaign in Judah was a brilliant success, and in this way the capture of Lachish is made to blot out Sennacherib's inability to take Jerusalem, as well as the disaster which befell his army before that city. But the Lachish bas-reliefs—as we may properly designate this series of sculptures—were intended to be something more than a mere blind. Any one who examines them carefully will, I think, come to the conclusion that they were also designed to soothe the monarch's wounded pride. The military power of the Great King, the respect paid him by those about his person, the state which surrounds him even when campaigning in a foreign land, the dread experienced by crouching captives when brought before one who holds their lives in his hands and who at his will can sentence them to the most barbarous tortures—all these are tellingly represented in the sculptures taken from the Lachish Room of Sennacherib's palace, and as we look at them we much wonder for what purpose that room was intended. Let it also be noted that the epigraphs are not merely explanatory, like those which meet us in the bas-reliefs on the Eastern side of the Kouyunjik Gallery depicting battle scenes in Ashurbanipal's war with Elam; they are adulatory as well. Sennacherib is everywhere, even his tent is thought worthy of an epigraph.

We are now at liberty to form some estimate of the character of Sennacherib, and it is already very evident that he was a man of like passions as we are. He was not a monster of cruelty like

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[1] The bas-reliefs, referred to above, formed part of a set of thirteen slabs which adorned the sides of a small central room, measuring 38 feet by 18, marked xxxvi. on the Plan opposite p. 67 in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*. Layard observes that the sculptures in this room were in better preservation than any he had before found at Kouyunjik, and especially, that the epigraph explaining the scene was complete. For this, surely we may well thank God.

Ashur-natsir-pal, who revelled in the atrocities perpetrated on his enemies. He was not so barbarous even as his grandson, Ashur-bani-pal, who could feast in his palace gardens and see in front of him his queen and behind her the gory head of his enemy, Teumman king of Elam, hanging on a bush. It is true that as he sits on his throne outside Lachish captives are being stretched on the ground and flayed alive not far off. But the epigraph does not direct us to this cruel scene, as Ashur-natsir-pal would most certainly have done. The monarch is described and represented to us merely as receiving the captives and spoils that are brought before him. Further, he claims to be a righteous prince, "guardian of the right, lover of justice."[1] At Ekron he is careful to tell us how he punished the guilty but spared the innocent. But this rule only holds good as long as his own interests are not involved. In the case of Hezekiah he is anything but just. Having received from the Jewish king the costly tribute which he has himself prescribed, he hesitates not to break his part of the covenant by demanding the surrender of Jerusalem. In war, Sennacherib has been described as cautious and politic, an administrator as well as a general. Another writer speaks of him as energetic and rapid in his movements: daring and original in his strategy.[2] To take all the fenced cities of Judah, lead her people captive, and look to starvation to bring about the capitulation of Jerusalem, was a wise course of policy from the Assyrian point of view, and would most certainly have been crowned with success, but for Divine intervention at the last extremity. To get ships built by his Tyrian captives with a view to descending the great rivers into the Persian Gulf and so making an attack on Elam by sea, showed no small originality on the part of the ruler of an inland kingdom. His caution is shown in the year spent by him at home, preparing for his final descent on Babylon: his energy in the rapidity of that descent, which was such as to give him some claim to be regarded as the "fiery flying serpent" of Isa. xiv. 29.

The inscriptions of Sennacherib partake less of the character of state records, and exhibit more of a personal touch than those of the other Sargonids. The monarch is very anxious to assure his readers of his strength, agility, and courage. At one time he compares himself to a lion or a wild ox; at another, to a young gazelle. On the field of battle never was there such a dauntless warrior, such a devoted servant of "Ashur my lord." When speaking of his foes he displays an irritable temperament, treating them with spite and contempt, and calling them names. The Khirimme are "obstinate enemies"; the Babylonians, "wicked devils." Merodachbaladan is "an evil-doer, whose guilt is heavy." Ummanminan king of Elam "possesses neither sense nor judgment." Nevertheless he has the generosity in one instance to speak of a hostile commander as a "circumspect man."[1] In his destruction of Babylon it must be confessed that he shows himself stern, merciless, and revengeful.

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, i. 4.

[2] Goodspeed, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 281.

The brighter side of Sennacherib's character is to be seen in the sportsmanlike cheerfulness with which he faces natural difficulties. To be compelled to quit his sedan-chair and climb up a steep mountain side, sitting down on a boulder to rest and quench his thirst, quite tickles his fancy.[2] He is no less jocular over his expedition to Elam across the head of the Persian Gulf, and tells quite merrily how "the mighty waves of the sea came up and entered my tent, and they completely surrounded me as if I were in my camp." Meanwhile his troops are described as camping "in the mighty ships, as in cages, for five days and five nights" before he was able to join them on the shore of the Bitter Sea.[3] Again, when the winter rains and snows force him after a too late undertaken campaign to leave Elam without having been able to encounter and secure her king, he is quite unruffled and looks upon it merely as a novel experience.[4]

Though Sennacherib undertook several military expeditions in person, yet it would be a great mistake to regard him simply as a man of war. Like the Neo-Babylonian rulers of a later age he was quite alive to the value of commerce, and in 690 B.C. sent an expedition to Tarsus to keep open the Cilician Road, which formed one of the main caravan routes connecting Asia Minor with Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt, and was at that time threatened by Greek pirates who had established themselves in the neighbourhood. His chief efforts, however, were devoted to fortifying, enlarging, and beautifying his capital city. What Babylon was to Nebuchadnezzar, and Paris to Napoleon, that Nineveh was to Sennacherib. The octagonal prism, known as B.M. 103,000, which tells us of the expedition to Tarsus and is the longest of Sennacherib's inscriptions, furnishes a very lengthy commentary on the brief Biblical statement that he "dwelt at Nineveh." Here we find details of the captives from Palestine and other countries whom he employed on his works, and of the places from which he got his building materials. We are also told how the rafts, which brought his stone bulls down the Tigris, were almost swamped at the end of the voyage, and the powers of their crews taxed to the utmost to bring them to land. A long description is then given us of "The Palace Without a Rival," whose name recalls Henry the Eighth's "Nonsuch," and we read of streams embanked or altered in their course, of the enlarged Nineveh with its wall and rampart, and fifteen gates, all bearing names of honour, of the gardens planted above and below the city, of the water supply, and of the plants and animals acclimatised in the parks. A curious and interesting account is also given of the king's inventing a new method for bronze castings, which may be placed alongside of the statement of Abydenus that Sennacherib erected bronze statues at Tarsus; and an interesting mention is made of half-shekel pieces. Finally, we arrive at the Dedication Feast, held in his new palace, when, as he expresses it, "I drenched the foreheads of the people of my land with wine: with mead I sprinkled their hearts." Surely never was there so copious a commentary on so brief a record: "dwelt at Nineveh!"

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[1] Taylor Cylinder, col. v. 70.
[2] *Ibid.* col. iii. 76–80: cf. also col. i. 66–69.
[3] Bull Inscription, No. 4.
[4] Taylor Cylinder, col. iv. 75–79

We turn next to the murder of Sennacherib. The brief record just referred to, which taken along with the previous and subsequent context reads thus: "So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword," has led some to imagine that the Sacred Historian was under the impression that Sennacherib was murdered soon after his return from Judah. And yet the single word "dwelt," so significant of continuance, might well have kept them from jumping to such a conclusion. As a matter of fact Sennacherib was not murdered till 681 B.C., twenty years after his return from Palestine. The statement that his sons were the assassins received confirmation, first, from the Babylonian Chronicle, where the crime along with the succession of Esarhaddon is thus recorded: "On the 20th day of the month Tebet (Dec.–Jan.) Sennacherib king of Assyria was murdered by his own son in an insurrection. For 24 years Sennacherib reigned over Assyria. From the 20th day of the month Tebet until the 2nd day of the month Adar (Feb.–Mar.) insurrection is recorded in Assyria. On the 8th day of the month Sivan (May–June) Esarhaddon his son sat on the throne in Assyria." It was then pointed out that the above record mentions only one assassin, while the Bible speaks of two. Any doubts which might have been felt on this slight and easily explained difference have been set at rest by an account more recently discovered, which comes to us from the pen of Esarhaddon himself. "A disloyal thought," he writes, "seized my brothers; the gods they abandoned, they plotted evil, a deed which was not according to the heart of the gods they planned behind my back. In opposition to the gods, they wished to turn the heart of my father against me, the humble; but his heart loved me, and his eyes were fixed upon my rule. They revolted, and to secure the kingship Sennacherib they killed."[1] This very enlightening passage shows the motive of the crime. Esarhaddon was not Sennacherib's eldest son, as is witnessed by his name, *Ashur-akhi-iddina*, "Ashur has given a brother." His eldest son was Ashur-nadin-shum, who, as we have seen, was carried captive to Elam in the sixth year of his reign as king of Babylon. Since the death of Ashur-nadin-shum, Esarhaddon had received from his father a longer and more impressive name: *Ashur-etil-ilani-mukin-aplu*, "Ashur, the lord of the gods, has established an heir." This name showed clearly enough the father's intention to appoint Esarhaddon as his successor. He had also conferred other honours upon him, and had appointed him to the post of governor of Babylon, of which his eldest brother had been king. All these marks of favour appear to have stirred up the jealousy of his brothers, and it was this jealousy which led them to murder their father. The names of the two murderers are given in Scripture as Adrammelech and Sharezer. Abydenus in his Assyrian History gives them as Adramelus and Nergilus, and also states that Nergilus succeeded his father on the throne. Adrammelech answers to the Assyrian name *Ardi-melek* "servant of the king," but according to some we are to see in it the name *Ardi-Malkat*, which is another reading of the name Ardi-Belit borne by one of the sons of Sennacherib. Nergilus and Sharezer, as Prof. Schrader points out, are both of them abbreviated names, so that the full name of this son may have been Nergal-shar-ezer. The statement that Nergilus succeeded Sennacherib must refer to the 42 days, from Tebet 20 to Adar 2, during which the insurrection lasted. The name Nisroch, given to Sennacherib's god, still remains a mystery. Winckler sees it in a purposeful defacement of the name Marduk, formed by exchanging the consonants of the first syllable for the next letters of the Hebrew alphabet—as in writing Nego for Nebo in the name Abednego—and then replacing the letter *d* with an *r*, those letters being very similar in Hebrew. Sayce, guided by the name Araske, found in the account given by Josephus, thinks that Nisroch may possibly be a corruption of the name of the national god, Ashur, who was emphatically the god of

[1] Olmstead, p. 338.

Sennacherib. A further reference to the murder of Sennacherib is found in the annals of Ashurbanipal. Ashurbanipal, after describing how the dangerous rebellion fomented by his brother Shamash-shum-ukin king of Babylon had been put down and how that king and his princes had set fire to the palace and thrown themselves into the flames, goes on to tell of the severities practised by him on the rebel soldiery, adding, " the rest of the survivors—near the bull-colossus, where my grandfather Sennacherib was slain, I now slew them as an offering to the dead in his behalf,"[1] *i.e.* for his ghost: according to a belief prevalent among the ancients that disembodied spirits needed food. Ashurbanipal probably thought that no food could be more grateful to the spirit of his grandfather, the destroyer of Babylon, than the bodies of Babylonian rebels. The spot where the murder was perpetrated is described as being near a bull-colossus. Such were placed at the entrances to temples, and thus this description of the spot where the murder took place agrees with the Biblical statement that Sennacherib at the time of his death was worshipping in the temple of his god. The bull-colossi were looked upon as protecting deities, and for this reason were placed at the portals of temples and palaces. How vain was such protection in the case of Sennacherib!

That a king should be murdered by his sons was regarded in the ancient Semitic world as a special sign of the wrath of heaven. An old Babylonian ballad, which has a most interesting bearing on the historical record contained in Genesis, chap. xiv., tells how Kudur-Lakhamal (Chedorlaomer), king of Elam, Dur-tsir-ilani the son of Eri-Aku (Arioch), and Tudkhula (Tidal) the son of Gazza, who had united to ravage Babylonia, were each of them slain by their sons.[2] We may reasonably believe, then, that the Sacred Historian held this view when he tells us how Sennacherib, who had wasted the land of Judah and broken his pledged word, met his death at the hands of two of his sons.

Sennacherib's building activities found their scope at Nineveh, but were not confined to that city. Several of his shorter inscriptions come to us from the city of Ashur. Nineveh was his capital, his London: Ashur, the old home of the kingdom, his Westminster. At Nineveh he built his palace: at Ashur he restored E-Sharra, the temple of the national god, whose name is spelt the same as that of the city and the nation. At Ashur too, as one might expect, is found his sepulchre; on whose bricks may be read the following inscription:

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[1] Rassam Cylinder, col. iv. 70–73.

[2] Cf. my booklet on Psalm cx. and Gen. xiv. pub. by Thynne and Jarvis.

"The palace of rest,
The sepulchre of repose,
The eternal abode,[1]
Of Sennacherib, king of the universe, king of Assyria."

On another brick inscription the royal tomb is described as

"the house established firm as heaven and earth."[1]

The murderers of Sennacherib, who for a few weeks carried things their own way at Nineveh, were not left long in peace. Esarhaddon at the time of the murder was in his province of Babylon. Encouraged by favourable oracles, he hastened northwards despite the winter cold, and marched, first, to Arbela, where he was well received, and thence to Nineveh. By the middle of March he was seated on his father's throne. The rebels were then pursued and defeated in N. Mesopotamia. This resulted in most of their army coming over to his side, and obliged his two brothers, as we learn from Isa. xxxvii. 38, to fly for their lives to the neighbouring country of Ararat. Ararat, the Urartu of the Assyrian inscriptions, had proved a formidable foe to Assyria in the days of Tiglathpileser III, and again in the closing years of Sargon. With Ararat the cautious Sennacherib was outwardly at peace; but the recollections of the past, and of Sargon's doings in that country, must still have survived; and this would render Ararat a safe asylum for the foes of Assyria.

We may suitably close this chapter by considering the results to Judah and to the world of Western Asia of the brave stand made by Hezekiah and the wonderful deliverance vouchsafed to him by Jehovah.

Two kings only had been able with some degree of success to hold out against the attack of Assyria and to elude and baffle the invader, viz. Lulê, king of Tyre and Zidon, and Hezekiah king of Judah. But while Lulê, as Sennacherib himself informs us, had fled to Cyprus, only to die there of terror, Hezekiah remained seated on his throne at Jerusalem.[2] Further, the wonderful nature of Hezekiah's deliverance, and the fact that it was due to the interposition of the God of Jerusalem and in answer to the king's prayer, would soon be bruited abroad among the surrounding peoples, as may be gathered from the story told to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests, and this would have just that effect which the Chronicler describes: "Many brought gifts to Jehovah to Jerusalem, and precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah; so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from thenceforth."[1] A belief in the God of Jerusalem, mixed with gratitude to the pious king of Judah, whose prayer had delivered the countries of the West from the Assyrian scourge, would be felt in many quarters, so that the Psalmist might well call to the neighbouring nations,

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[1] Cf. Isa. xiv. 18, "All the kings of the nations, all of them sleep in glory, every one in his own house": and for "the eternal abode" spoken of the grave compare the "long home" of Eccles. xii. 5.

[2] See the Bull Inscriptions, Nos. 1, 2, 3, lines 18–19, "Lulê, king of Zidon, feared my battle. To Yatnan (Cyprus), which is in the midst of the sea, he fled, and took refuge. In that land through terror of the weapons of Ashur my lord he died." Almost immediately after this come the words about "the strong, proud Hezekiah" quoted above.

"Vow, and pay unto Jehovah your God;
Let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought
to be feared."[2]

But we are led to ask further, Did Hezekiah recover his former position with regard to Philistia, in part of which he had won by his arms the position of suzerain? We cannot tell, for no record is left us; but the natural presumption would be that he did. Nevertheless, about a quarter of a century later, when a ray of light again breaks forth on the situation from the Assyrian records, in the shape of a list of the vassal kings who helped Esarhaddon to build his palace at Nineveh, we note that while Judah under Manasseh stands first among the kings of Southern Palestine, Ekron and Ashkelon still have kings of their own.[3] So that Judah scarcely holds the same place which she held before the invasion, when a king with a distinctively Jewish name reigned in Ashkelon and Padi king of Ekron was a prisoner in Jerusalem. How are we to account for this apparent decline in the prestige of Judah? Looked at from the Divine side, the explanation is very simple. Manasseh is now on the throne of Judah, and, as the Sacred Records show, he is a most determined idolater: the very last person we should expect to receive help from Jehovah, far less any miraculous intervention in his behalf. Looked at from the human side, the explanation is equally simple. For it was clearly to the advantage of Assyria that Southern Palestine should be broken up into small states, whose mutual jealousies would prevent them from uniting to oppose her forward march against Egypt. It is clear, however, that Hezekiah's brave stand has brought about something more than that brief blaze of glory described by the Chronicler. It has led Assyria to change her policy in the West. Judah and the neighbouring states, instead of being formed into an Assyrian province like Samaria and Damascus, are still allowed to have their own rulers, and the kingship has been restored even to Ashdod. In this way, then, the sovereignty of the Davidic line of kings was prolonged for over a century, so that the Jewish state outlived the far more powerful Assyrian state which had so grievously oppressed her. Another result was that the conquest of Egypt by Assyria was delayed for at least a quarter of a century. Both Tiglathpileser and Sargon had knocked at the door of Egypt, but Sennacherib meant to do more : he meant to force open that door. Yet in point of fact he never reached it. For Egypt came forth to meet him at Eltekeh, and was despatching another army to oppose him when the disaster to his forces before Jerusalem, coupled possibly with anxious tidings from Babylonia, compelled him to hasten home. That he ever returned again to the West is very unlikely. To imagine a second campaign in Palestine, attended with heavy disaster, is altogether unnecessary. Between the lines of the Assyrian's halting record we can read disaster plainly enough. What form that disaster took, is told us in the historic records of the Old Testament.

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[1] 2 Chron. xxxii. 23.

[2] Ps. lxxvi. 11.

[3] Cylinder B, col. v. 12–27.

Such, then, were the more immediate results of Hezekiah's great victory of faith. But far more blessed results, affecting the whole of Christendom, and more especially affecting us who live in this later age, were destined to flow from that terrible ordeal. The period of Assyrian invasion in the West, which has now so long occupied us, thanks to the light thrown by the monuments of that people, has proved very fruitful in supplying confirmations of the veracity of the Hebrew records. It was this which invested those monuments with such singular interest in the early days of Assyriology, when the complicated cuneiform script first began to be read ; when Hincks detected the name *As-du-di*, " Ashdod," on the monuments of Sargon, and was able to assure the astonished world that the city so hotly besieged on the famous bas-relief was none other than the Biblical Lachish. These historic confirmations, on which I have already said so much, I commend to the serious consideration of those who find it difficult to believe in the supernatural, in prophecy and miracle ; for surely the prophecies of Isaiah, and the astonishing deliverance of Jerusalem from the arms of Sennacherib, have much to say to us on that point.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BURDEN OF EGYPT

"I will make the rivers (or Nile-arms) dry, and will sell the land into the hand of evil men; and I will make the land desolate, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the Lord have spoken it."—EZEK. xxx. 12.

THE Burden of Egypt is one of the most interesting, and at the same time one of the most difficult of the Isaianic predictions. The difficulty arises from our very partial knowledge of certain periods of Egyptian history, and our ignorance as to the spread of the worship of Jehovah in that country. Consequently many interpretations of this prophecy have been put forward, and a great variety of opinions have been entertained as to its author, the time of its utterance, and the times of its fulfilment. I have not entered into these because they would only bewilder my readers, and shall be content with simply stating that I look upon the prophecy as Isaianic, uttered at some time after the overthrow of Sennacherib, and beginning to be fulfilled in the prophet's old age, or more probably after his death. For this reason I have given it a late place in my book.

As has often been observed the prophecy consists of two parts. The first part, verses 1–15 is a poem written in highly figurative language: the second, verses 16–25, a prose appendix with five subdivisions, each beginning with the words "In that day." We have already met with this feature in the Burden of Tyre, chap. xxiii., where verses 1–14 form a complete poem beginning and ending with the same refrain, while the rest of the chapter is a prose appendix introduced with the words "And it shall come to pass in that day."

Taken as a whole the Burden of Egypt may be described as a peep down the long-drawn vista of the future, and the seer to whom this peep is granted may be likened to a traveller standing on the summit of some mountain pass commanding a prospect down the far-receding valley in front of him. At first he can see nothing, for a thunderstorm which is raging in the foreground blots out the landscape. This is the picture of Jehovah's judgment poured out on idolatrous Egypt. But instead of swollen brooks and raging torrents, the sequel of the storm, so peculiar are the conditions of that country that the effect of those judgments on Egypt must needs be described in the Burden by the very opposite figure, viz. the drying up of the Nile. As the storm passes our traveller begins to see down the valley, and in mid distance catches sight of a mountain range, one bold peak of which more especially arrests his attention. This is the form of the "cruel lord" and the "fierce king"—or as I would prefer to render the adjectives the "hard lord" and the "strong king"—into whose hand Jehovah will deliver the Egyptians. But the prospect opens out further as the storm recedes, and in the distance the traveller sees another mountain range, on a grander and loftier scale than the former, and also distinguished by a commanding peak of very noble outline. Over this range storm and sunshine play alternately, until finally the latter gains the victory and the far distance is all bathed in light. This second range is another and greater power which is to dominate over the former, and the commanding peak of noble outline is the "saviour" and "defender," whom, in answer to their cry, Jehovah will send to deliver the Egyptians; but as this deliverance is not to come all at once, the storm and sunshine playing upon it are figures of the "smiting and healing," by which under this second power He will heal the Egyptians.

Such is the picture: but we have next to inquire, What is the actual standpoint from which the seer views it? In other words, What is the ground or motive to this prophetic utterance? I think we shall find it in that spirit of infatuation which led the Chosen People ever to look to Egypt for help against Assyria. It was this spirit which in 722 B.C. led to the downfall of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes;[1] and though some ten years later it received a sharp check at the time of the fall of Ashdod,[2] yet we see it breaking out again on the eve of the invasion of Sennacherib.[3] On that occasion, as foretold by the prophet, the Egyptians helped in vain and to no purpose: a large Egyptian army was defeated at Eltekeh, whilst the raising of the siege of Jerusalem was of a sudden and miraculous nature. Still those Jewish politicians who led the Egyptian party in Judah would be sure to urge that what first caused Sennacherib to turn back was the intelligence of the advance of a second Egyptian army. It was, then, the desire to check this false trust in Egypt which we may suppose to have prompted Isaiah to utter this Burden.

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[1] 2 Kings xvii. 4–6.

[2] Isa. xx. 3–6.

[3] Isa. xxx. 1–6, xxxi. 1–3.

In the opening verse Jehovah comes to execute judgment upon Egypt riding on His cloud-chariot. This is a figure taken from the thunder-storm, where in the forefront of the storm light grey clouds are seen passing across a dark background.[1] The judgment is called down by Egypt's gross idolatry. Every work on Ancient Egypt bears witness to the multitudinous, complicated, and bewildering idolatries of that favoured land. In Egypt idolatry seems to have gone mad. We can understand the Egyptians worshipping sun, moon, and stars, and their sacred Nile; but how they came to populate the universe with a "rabble of gods,"[2] it is beyond us to imagine; while we turn with repulsion from what Milton so well calls "the brutish gods of Nile."[3] Hence, in this judgment on Egypt the idols are pictures as "moved" at the near presence of Jehovah, whilst the hearts of their worshippers melt like the hearts of the Canaanites of old. In vain Egypt has recourse to these "nonentities,"[4] whilst her "charmers" or mutterers of magic spells, her necromancers who are in touch with the spirit-world, and her wizards who profess to tell the future, are all powerless to help her. Egypt is thus completely out of spirit, and at the same time she is divided, a victim of civil strife. These two things prevent her from putting up any stout resistance to the foe; for this coming of Jehovah into Egypt, as the text placed at the head of this chapter shows,[5] signifies nothing less than invasion, such a thing as Egypt has not experienced for long centuries, viz. from the days of the Hyksos; and this invasion is to end in the establishment of a military despotism, when Jehovah gives over the Egyptians "into the hand of a hard lord, and a strong king shall rule over them." Such is the first strophe of this prophetic Burden, ending with the words "saith Jehovah of hosts," or rather "oracle of Jehovah of hosts."

In the second strophe, verses 5–10, the commercial and industrial ruin of the country caused by invasion is pictured by the drying up of the Nile, seeing that in Egypt everything depends on the Nile. With the drying up of the Nile sickness and disease are bred by the stench from the stagnant waters:[6] agriculture perishes:[7] the fishing industry is gone:[8] and the textile workers in linen and cotton have no material on which to employ their hands:[9] in fine, the ruin is universal, for the "pillars" of Egypt,

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[1] Ps. xviii. 10–14, and cf. Rev. xiv. 14.

[2] So Prof. Maspero. [3] *Hymn to the Nativity.* [4] Heb. *'elîlîm.*

[5] Ezekiel, when predicting the invasion of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, uses the same figure which is employed in the sixth verse of this chapter; the drying up of the "streams" or Nile-arms.

[6] Verse 6. [7] Verse 7. [8] Verse 8. [9] Verse 9.

i.e. her capitalists on whom so many depend, are "broken in pieces," and "all they that work for hire," being thrown out of employment, are "grieved in soul."[1]

In the third strophe, verses 11–15, the prophet satyrises the boasted wisdom of Egypt.[2] Pharaoh is pictured consulting his counsellors, and consulting them in vain. They cannot tell him what is going to happen, and "what Jehovah of hosts hath purposed concerning Egypt." The princes of Zoan and of Noph, those who form "the corner stone of her tribes,"[3] *i.e.* of her nomes or principalities, being deceived themselves, only lead their subjects astray and act like men infatuated. Noph, or Memphis, is mentioned as being the capital of Lower Egypt; while the double mention of Zoan, lying on the eastern side of the Delta, is very suggestive as to the quarter from which invasion is expected. Egypt, being thus perplexed and at a loss, staggers to and fro like a drunken man, and is incapable of making any steady, definite, and united effort. The closing verse of this third strophe—"Neither shall there be for Egypt any work, which head or tail, palm-branch or rush, may do," makes use of the same expression which occurs in chap. ix. 14. The sense is well given in *The Cambridge Bible* thus: "No concerted action is possible, and every proposal that is brought forward falls to the ground."

Such is the Burden of Egypt. The fivefold appendix which follows is of a totally different character, except that at the outset it represents Egypt as cowering under some judgment. In the first place it is different from the literary point of view, poetry being exchanged for prose. We need not, however, on that account refuse to look upon it as the work of Isaiah. Indeed the first division, which describes the judgment, speaks of Jehovah as shaking His hand over Egypt. In chap. x. 32 the Assyrian shakes his hand at Jerusalem: in chap. xi. 15 Jehovah shakes His hand over the River, *i.e.* the Euphrates: in chap. xiii. 2 the hand is waved, or shaken—it is the same word in the Hebrew—as the signal for the advance of an army: and in chap. xxx. 32 Jehovah fights against the Assyrian "in battles of shaking." But the appendix is not only different in literary style, it is also different in tone and outlook; and unfolds, as we shall see, a further chapter in the long-drawn history of Egypt. The abject terror caused in Egypt by Jehovah's menacing judgment gives place to a public recognition of Jehovah, and to penitential prayers, judgment passes into chastisement, and chastisement into the sunshine of the Divine favour. In the first division we see Egypt recognising the Hand that smites her, and so deeply conscious of the quarter from which the judgment comes, that the mere mention of the land of Judah, "Jehovah's land"[1] throws her into a state of panic. Of this I hope to give an historic explanation. It will be sufficient to say now that it is explained in part, but only in part, by a fact told us in the second division, viz. that there are already in Egypt a certain number of cities in which the language of Canaan is spoken,[2] and which therefore contain a considerable Jewish population. This would help to spread the knowledge of Jehovah, but would not in itself lead the Egyptians to recognise in Jehovah the Author of their troubles. The third division mentions certain visible signs of the recognition of Jehovah being set up in Egypt. In the midst of the land is seen an altar to Jehovah, and on the Palestinian border a pillar to Jehovah. This altar is not for sacrifice, but "for a sign and for a witness unto Jehovah of hosts in the land of Egypt"—a witness that He has a people in Egypt—and the occasion of its being raised is thus described, "when he shall send them a saviour and a defender, and he shall deliver them." The pillar, also, is not an idolatrous pillar such as are forbidden in the Law,[3] but a memorial pillar like that raised by Jacob at Bethel.[4] Further, we notice that it is placed on the border of Egypt, presumably the Palestinian border; for Egypt is no longer terrified at the mention of the land of Judah, but desires to be one with Judah in the worship of Judah's God. In fine this pillar and altar remind us strongly of the altar of witness raised by the two and a half tribes on the east side of Jordan.[5] As Jehovah, by sending them a deliverer, has made Himself still further known to the Egyptians, they go on to worship Him with sacrifices and votive offerings. When we come to trace the historic fulfilment, we shall see who the deliverer is, and shall find that at the time of his coming Jehovah was thus worshipped in the land of Egypt. For the present we note that the deliverance does not come all at once, and that Jehovah's dealings with Egypt take the form of fatherly chastisements. He smites the Egyptians, and by smiting heals them. The strokes of His rod call forth their prayers, and their prayers call forth His all-powerful aid in their behalf. The fourth division of the appendix speaks of intercourse being freely carried on between Egypt and Assyria, the dwellers on the banks of the Nile and those who live in the Land of the Two Rivers, the old rivalry between the empires having entirely passed away: indeed, the empires no longer exist, and the inhabitants of those countries "worship," or "serve,"[1] the same earthly ruler and the same Heavenly King, and this is the secret of the blessed harmony which exists between them. This thought leads us on to the fifth and last division, in which it is declared that "in that day," that glorious Day which throws its light across the whole appendix making it contrast so brightly with the dark Burden, Israel will be a third with Egypt and Assyria: not third on a list of favoured nations in which Egypt stands first and Assyria second, but on a par with those two nations, and yet privileged to be a centre of blessing to them both, "a blessing in the midst of the earth: for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

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[1] Verse 10.

[2] Cf. Hdt. bk. ii. 160.

[3] Verse 13, cf. Jud. xx. 2, margin.

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[1] Hos. ix. 3.

[2] One of these cities is called *Ir Haheres* "the City of Destruction," the name being a play on *Ir Hacheres*, "the City of the Sun," Heliopolis, where the Sun-god, Egypt's chief divinity, was specially worshipped. Possibly this play on the name is significant that the worship of the Sun, like that of the great goddess Diana at Ephesus, is presently to give place to a purer religion. Heliopolis, the Biblical On, Gen. xli. 45, is called in Jer. xliii. 13 Beth-Shemesh, "the House of the Sun." It was situated at the apex of the Delta, a little north of the modern Cairo.

[3] Deut. vii. 5, xii. 3, xvi. 22.

[4] Gen. xxviii. 18.

[5] Joshua xxii. 26, 27.

We have now to see how far the Isaianic Burden and its appendix can be interpreted by the known facts of history: and first with regard to the invasion of Egypt. Jehovah's coming into Egypt I have taken to signify the invasion of that country, and have explained the drying up of the Nile with all its disastrous consequences to be a symbolic picture of the ruin caused in Egypt by invasion. The prophet Ezekiel, who is conversant with the writings of Isaiah,[2] supplies us with this interpretation. In Ezek. xxx. 10–12, after describing the terrible carnage that will take place at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of Egypt, Ezekiel, speaking as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, adds, "And I will make the rivers," the Nile-arms,[3] "dry, and will sell the land into the hand of evil men." Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt in 567 B.C., during the reign of Amasis, as we know from a fragment of his annals. His invasion was probably limited to the Delta. The Assyrians invaded the country four times, and on the last occasion penetrated as far up the Nile as Thebes, the No-Amon of Nahum iii. 8. Hence while Ezekiel speaks of the drying up of "the rivers" of Egypt, *i.e.* the divided waters of the Delta, the Isaianic Burden speaks of the drying up of the Nile itself. It is to the record of these Assyrian invasions that we must now turn.

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[1] The word is well chosen; it is used of the service of the earthly ruler as well as of the service of Jehovah: cf. Gen. xiv. 4, Exod. xiv. 12, 2 Kings xviii. 7, Jer. xxviii. 14.

[2] Cf. Ezek. xxix. 3 with Isa. xxvii. 1, and Ezek. xxix. 6, 7 with Isa. xxxvi. 6. Cf. also his repeated description of the Babylonians as "the terrible of the nations" with Isaiah's description of the Assyrians in chap. xxv. 3–5.

[3] An Egyptian loan-word; used in the Singular of the Nile, in the Plural of the Nile-arms, *i.e.* the tributaries (Isa. vii. 18) and more frequently, as here, of the divided waters in the Delta.

Assyria had long cast her greedy eyes on Egypt, desirous if possible to annex it, or at any rate to plunder to her heart's content so wealthy a country. Tiglathpileser and Sargon had marched up to the gates of Egypt, and given loud and menacing knocks. Sennacherib had intended to do something more, and to do it with ease. The prophet represents him as saying in his heart, "With the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt,"[1] literally "all the Nile-arms of Matsor," the very same expression which in verse 6 is translated "the streams of Egypt." But Sennacherib received a mysterious check before the walls of Jerusalem, and instead of doing more than his predecessors, he did less. Still, the design of invading, and if possible annexing Egypt, was not relinquished by Assyrian sovereigns: and Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon, having in part placated, and in part terrified the Arabs of the intervening desert,[2] who could do so much either to help or to hinder his design, set out in all earnest in 675 B.C. to accomplish this much-desired object, and reached the desert of Melukhkha. In the following year, according to a terse entry in the Babylonian Chronicle, "the Assyrian army marched in Egypt." Of this first invasion we know very little: it appears to have ended in some reverse to the Assyrian arms. The three invasions which followed, in the years 671, 669, and 663 respectively, carried out first by Esarhaddon, and after his death by his son Ashurbanipal, were far more serious matters. In 671 three battles were fought in Egypt under the blazing midsummer sun, and Memphis, the capital of Lower Egypt, the Noph of the Isaianic Burden, was captured. After this the tide of war ebbed and flowed over the unhappy land. Oft as the Assyrian troops withdrew, the Ethiopians re-appeared, and it is clear that the sympathies of the Egyptians were more with the latter than with the former. Memphis was taken and retaken twice, till at last in the final invasion of 663 it was captured for the third time by the Assyrians, who now, bent on giving their foes a lesson that would not soon be forgotten, advanced from thence up the Nile, a forty days' march, and startled the world by capturing Thebes, the capital of Upper Egypt and seat of the Ethiopian power in Egypt. This brilliant feat put an end to Ethiopian rule, and the country settled down for a few brief years as part of the Assyrian empire.

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[1] Isa. xxxvii. 25.

[2] Hazael king of Arabia was placated by the restoration of his gods, see Chapter XVI, above; and the desert tribes of Hazu and Bazu, supposed to be the Uz and Buz of Gen. xxii. 21, were overawed by a raid into their territories resulting in the death of eight of their chieftains.

When we try to realise that dire period of Assyrian invasion and to picture to ourselves Egypt overrun by vast armies marching and counter-marching, we feel that the prophet's symbolic description of the Nile as dried up is not overdrawn. Isaiah was thinking of the commercial and industrial ruin of a great and powerful country ; but we have also to think of the awful carnage and suffering caused by these repeated invasions. Ashurbanipal, consulting the oracle of the war-goddess, Ishtar of Arbela, as to the issue of a further projected invasion, received the following answer: "I will fill the land with blood, will turn it into a desert with weeping and wailing. Dost thou ask, 'Where shall be weeping and wailing?' Weeping has entered Egypt, wailing has come out therefrom."[1] This oracle the Assyrian did his best to make good. When telling us how his generals put down an insurrection which they had detected, he writes thus: "The people of Sais, of Mendes, of Tsi'anu, and of the rest of the cities, as many as were acting in concert with them and had devised a plan of evil, small and great, with weapons they overcame. They left not a soul therein. Their corpses they impaled. With their skins, which they had stripped off, they covered the wall of the city."[2]

The Ethiopian Dynasty, which came to an end in 663, was succeeded by a Saite Dynasty dating from the previous year, which lasted for 139 years down to 525 B.C.[3] It is in this Saite Dynasty, and more particularly in its first monarch, Psammetichus I, that we seem to recognise the personality of "the hard lord and the strong king." The rise of these Saite rulers may be described as follows: Egypt before the coming of the Ethiopians and throughout their rule was in a very divided state. Ashurbanipal mentions no fewer than twenty princes as exercising power in the country at the time of the invasion.[4] It is true that these princes acknowledged the Ethiopian sovereign as their suzerain, and that Thebes formed his Egyptian capital. But Napata, the real seat of the Ethiopian power, was a very long way off, so that these rulers were often able to act quite independently of their overlord. Now amongst them there existed a bitter spirit of rivalry, referred to in the second verse of the Burden: "I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom." It was this rivalry which first led to the calling in the help of the Ethiopians. Tafnakhti, prince of Sais in the W. Delta, was becoming so powerful that his neighbours in the E. Delta were led to invoke the aid of Pionkhi the Ethiopian.[1] As the Ethiopian rule spread over the whole country Tafknakhti submitted to it very reluctantly. After his death his son Bukunirînif, known to the Greeks as Bocchoris, succeeded, and followed in his father's steps. Bocchoris after a seven years' reign was defeated by the Ethiopian Shabaka in 715, and was either burnt or flayed alive. Necho, king of Sais at the time of the Assyrian invasions, was probably a descendant of Bocchoris, and must have welcomed the coming of the Assyrians as freeing him from the Ethiopian suzerainty. When Tirhakah in the course of those invasions re-appeared in Egypt, Necho at first remained loyal to the Assyrians, but was presently drawn into an alliance with the anti-Assyrian princes, and began to hatch along with them a plot of rebellion. The plot was discovered, and the rebel princes were caught and carried captive to Nineveh. Ashurbanipal, looking upon Necho as the chief of the captives, for Memphis was under his rule as well as Sais, and probably regarding him as an hereditary foe to the Ethiopian power, reinstated him in his kingship, and invested him with many marks of royal favour. Very shortly after Necho died and was succeeded by his son Psammetichus I, who is regarded as the first monarch of the XXVIth Dynasty. The reign of Psammetichus, 664–610, was long and prosperous. How far his position as a *protégé* of the Assyrians helped or hindered him, we cannot tell. At first, according to Herodotus,[2] he had many rivals, but he was soon able so to establish and extend his power that he was recognised as king of Egypt even by the Assyrians.[3]

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[1] Olmstead, p. 415.

[2] Rassam Cylinder, col. ii. 1–4.

[3] See Note at the end of this chapter.

[4] Rassam Cylinder, col. i. 90–109.

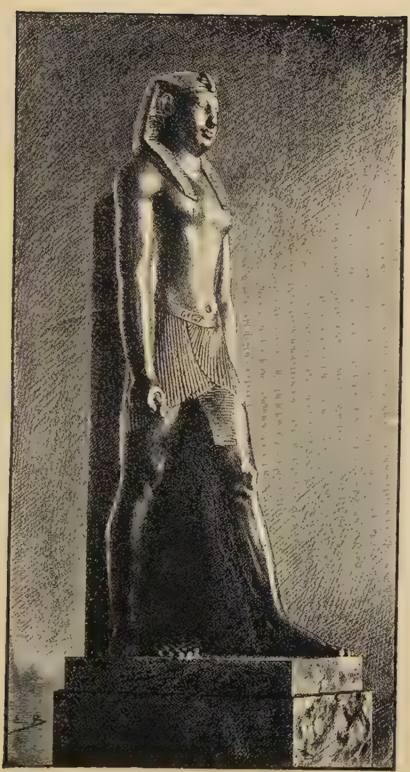
Psammetichus may justly be regarded as a "strong" king. His statue, exhibits a prince of remarkable decision, courage, and activity, and suits well the record of his reign. He reorganised the Egyptian army and engaged in great building works, more especially at Memphis and Sais. Under him the fine arts flourished exceedingly and Egypt experienced a surprising revival.[4] But

[1] See Chapter XIII, p. 126.

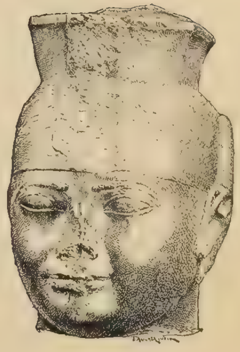
[2] Bk. ii. 151–2.

[3] Maspero's *Passing*, p. 492.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 501–504.



PSAMMETICHUS I, KING OF EGYPT. THE "CRUEL LORD" AND "FIERCE KING." ISA. XIX. 4.



TIRHAKAH, KING OF ETHIOPIA.

facing p. 320.

how can such an able and successful monarch be regarded as a "hard lord?" In the same way that Solomon of Israel was thus regarded. The forced labour exacted by Solomon was looked upon by his subjects as "grievous service,"[1] the adjective being the same that is here rendered "hard." Psammetichus must have employed forced labour in executing his great works. His son, Necho II, 610–594 B.C., is credited with having lost 120,000 men in an endeavour to connect the waters of the Mediterranean with those of the Red Sea.[2] But Psammetichus was a "hard lord" in another respect: his policy of using mercenary troops, which was pursued by his son Necho and even by the usurper Amasis,[3] 570–526 B.C., was most unpopular, and ultimately led the native troops, who felt that they were looked down upon, to desert in a body and march off to Ethiopia.[4] There is, therefore, good reason for looking upon Psammetichus and his dynasty as foretold in the words "I will give over the Egyptians into the hand of a hard lord; and a strong king shall rule over them."

If the above interpretation of the Isaianic Burden be correct, it is natural to look to the days of the next Egyptian Dynasty—a Persian Dynasty, known as Dynasty XXVII—to throw some light on the fulfilment of the very striking appendix. For the appendix, differing so much in style from the Burden, may very properly be expected to unfold another chapter is Egypt's long history, and I shall endeavour to show that such in indeed the case. The appendix opens with a second and very alarming visitation which is to overtake Egypt, a visitation differing from the former in that it is subsequently described as a smiting to be followed by a healing. Further, the Egyptians recognising the hand of Jehovah in the sore trouble that has befallen them, are to obtain deliverance from Him in answer to their penitent cry. What we have to do, then, is to inquire, whether under the Persian Dynasty there is any sequence of events corresponding with the above details.

The conquest of Egypt was accomplished by Cambyses in 525 B.C., just fourteen years after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. As the country had not been under a foreign yoke, with the exception of the few short years of Assyrian rule, since the days of the Hyksos, Cambyses seems to have judged it advisable to stay in Egypt for a while, and to do all he could to conciliate his new subjects. According to the only native contemporary record, viz. the inscription of Uzahor,[1] prince, treasurer, and true royal relation, Cambyses allowed the writer to instruct him in the Egyptian religion, and worshipped and offered offerings in the temple at Sais. In thus staying in Egypt Herodotus tells us that the Persian king had three further designs in view, viz. the capture of Carthage by sea, and the conquest of Ethiopia and of the oasis of Jupiter Amon by land. In all three he was singularly unsuccessful. His Phoenician sailors refused to go against their Carthaginian allies; the corps of 50,000 men, detached from his army and sent to conquer the famous oasis, perished in a sandstorm, and the main army accompanied by the king never reached Ethiopia, being compelled to return through their supplies running short. When at last they regained their starting-point, Memphis, they found the city *en fête* over the bringing into the temple of Phtah a fresh Apis, or sacred bull, and Cambyses unfortunately imagined that they were making merry over his misfortunes. This so irritated him that he put the magistrates to death, and plunged his dagger into the Apis, calling out to the priests, "Blockheads! think ye that gods become like this, of flesh and blood and sensible to steel? A fit god, indeed, for Egyptians such as you! But it shall cost you dear that you have made me your laughingstock."[2] After which he ordered the priests to be scourged and any of the Egyptians found keeping festival to be put to death.[2] Such is the record of the old Greek historian, and we know that his stories lose nothing in the telling; but, as we have seen in the case of the overthrow of Sennacherib, they generally contain a considerable core of truth. In the present instance this is made very evident by the recital of Uzahor. Uzahor, after telling how Cambyses worshipped in the temple at Sais, goes on to speak of his own concern for his father and brothers "*at the time when the calamity came to pass in the nome, the very great calamity which came to pass in the whole land, of which no one has seen the like in the land.*" Such words coming from the lips of an Egyptian priest are very full of meaning. In necessarily veiled language Uzahor speaks of the atrocities committed by Cambyses as practised on a very extensive scale—"*the very great calamity which came to pass in the whole land.*" His language is about as strong as it could well be. In speaking of the doings of a former king of Persia, he is compelled, however, to use veiled language, for, as he goes on to tell us, he is now a servant of Darius, and has been sent by him from Syria into Egypt to re-establish the school of sacred scribes after its ruin, and has been honourably conducted on his way by royal command and has restored things as they were before. He then adds, "His Majesty did this because he knew the virtue of this work of restoring all that he found wrecked, the names of all the gods, their temples, their endowments, and the management of their feasts for ever."

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[1] 1 Kings xii. 4, cf. v. 13, 14.

[2] Hdt. ii. 158.

[3] It was this very policy which in the first instance brought about the usurpation of Amasis. Hdt. ii. 163, 169.

[4] Hdt. ii. 30.

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[1] Flinders Petrie, *History of Egypt*, vol. iii. 360 *sqq.*

[2] Hdt. bk. iii. 17, 19, 26–29.

It appears from the above that the early years of Persian rule in Egypt may well be described as a smiting and a healing: Cambyses smote the Egyptians, and Darius healed them. But Cambyses and Darius were only the human instruments, and the prophecy speaks of the Egyptians as recognising the hand of Jehovah in the strange troubles that have befallen them. Egypt is to tremble and fear "because of the shaking of the hand of Jehovah of hosts, which he shaketh over it." How could the Egyptians come to know this? An answer to this question is supplied by that wonderful record discovered at Elephantinê, the copy of a letter sent by the heads of the Jewish colony at that spot in 408 B.C., to Bagoas, the Persian governor of Judah, asking permission to rebuild their temple, which had been thrown down by the heathen priests. In the course of their letter the writers adduce the following plea: "Our fathers built this temple in Yeb,[1] in the fortress, and when Cambyses went to Egypt he found this temple built. And the temples of the gods of Egypt were then all thrown down, but no one injured anything in this temple." The fact that Jehovah's temple was untouched at the time when all the Egyptian temples were overthrown must have produced a profound impression throughout Egypt. It will be said, I am aware, that the Jewish colony at Elephantinê was a military colony and that Cambyses would hardly be likely to destroy a temple in which his own troops worshipped. But on the other hand these troops had only very recently come under the Persian sway and their sympathies might be supposed to be with the late dynasty rather than with their new master. Again, we must bear in mind that what awoke the wrath of Cambyses according to Herodotus was the rejoicings of an idolatrous crowd at a heathen festival, and that his anger consequently vented itself in the destruction of the idol temples. Had the temple at Elephantinê been such, we may feel sure that it would have been destroyed. It was spared because it was the home of a purer faith. Hence this difference made by the Persian king between the idol temples and the temple of Jehovah must have affected the Egyptians in much the same way as the difference put by Jehovah between His own people and their oppressors during the plagues preceding the Exodus. In this way many would be led, as here predicted, to "know the LORD," and in the earnestness of their zeal might go on to make an open profession of their new faith by raising a "pillar" and an "altar." They would find no difficulty in doing this, for as the inscription of Uzahor shows, Darius protected all religions, even those very idolatries which Cambyses had so outraged, and would be yet more ready to protect worshippers who held a monotheistic religion like his own.

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[1] The native name of Elephantinê, which stood on an island in the Nile and on the southern frontier of Egypt. On the mainland opposite was Seveneh, mentioned in Ezek. xxix. 10, now known as Assouan.

The accession of so many proselytes to the Jewish faith would be welcomed by the Jews in Egypt, whose numbers were now very considerable. Even in Isaiah's day there were Jewish exiles all up the Nile, in Egypt, Pathros, and Cush;[1] and since then many must have gone thither of their own accord: some for purposes of commerce, others to undertake military duties under the Saite rulers, and others again, like the Jews left in Judah after the fall of Jerusalem, under the belief that they would be safer and better off there; that they would "see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread."

The appendix speaks of sacrifices being offered to Jehovah in the land of Egypt. This was being already done by the Jews themselves in their temple at Elephantinê, and had been done by them before the coming of the Persians. In the Elephantinê papyri mention is made of an altar on which sacrifices were daily offered, and the famous letter, already referred to, speaks of burnt offerings and of sacrificial bowls in which the blood of the victims was collected in order to be sprinkled on the altar. The regulations in Deut. xii. that the Jews in the Holy Land were only to offer sacrifices at the place which the Lord should choose, may have been looked upon as applying only to Palestine, "the purpose being to secure unity, and through unity the purity of the worship of God":[2] or the difficulty may have been surmounted as in the case of Naaman the Syrian by bringing earth for the altar from the sacred soil of Jehovah's land.[3] In any case we notice that when Onias in the reign of Ptolemy Philometor proposed to the Egyptian king to build a temple to Jehovah in the land of Egypt, he had no scruples on this point and adduced the present passage as his authority for so doing.[4]

Towards the close of the appendix we read that "in that day," the day when the Egyptians turn from idols to serve the living God, "there shall be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria, and the

[1] Isa. xi. 1.

[2] Speaker's Commentary *in loco.*

[3] 2 Kings v. 17.

[4] Josephus, *Antiquities*, xiii. 3. 1.

DARIUS THE GREAT.

facing p. 325.

Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptian shall worship with the Assyrian." Here the underlying thought, as indicated in the next verse, is that Jerusalem will form the common centre of worship. The Egyptians and the Assyrians will still invade one another, but from henceforth only in a friendly manner because they have learned to worship the same God and at the same shrine. Now the way in which this prediction is introduced—" There shall be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria "—bids us look for its fulfilment to the days of the Persian kings. Darius is credited with having constructed roads throughout his vast empire, and Herodotus mentions the famous "Royal Road" running from Susa to Sardis, as having been constructed by him.[1] Also the Persian postal system, of which the same writer speaks in terms of strong admiration, and which is seen to be in full operation in the days of Xerxes, is probably to be attributed to this prince.[2] These measures though undertaken with a purely military and political object, viz. to place the king in touch with all parts of his empire, must at the same time have done much to encourage intercourse between the various nations under his sway, and to make it easier and safer for persons to travel than in former times. Such a state of things, like the organisation of the Roman Empire in later days, would subserve the purposes of religion and help to spread the knowledge of the one true God.

A further indication that the prophecy points to Darius is to be found in the language employed to describe Egypt's deliverer. He is to be " a saviour and a mighty one." [3] The conquests of Darius, the strong hand with which he puts down his enemies, his wide empire stretching from India to Thrace, from Egypt to Bactria, the tone of his inscriptions, the character of his administration—all bear out the suitability of this description. By him, as we have already seen, Jehovah healed smitten Egypt. His rebuilding the heathen temples thrown down by Cambyses must not be looked upon as any encouragement to idolatry, but as an act of justice and tolerance. His own faith in the One God, from whom he derived his power, he never fails to proclaim. To Egypt he was an especial friend. As Petrie well observes, " The arrival of Darius in Egypt was the beginning of a new policy. So far the Persian had only sought to profit from the land. Darius saw that the prosperity of the country was the road to success.

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[1] Hdt. bk. v. 52–53.

[2] *Ibid.* bk. viii. 98. The Persian posts were carried by swift runners and also by mounted couriers. See Esther iii. 13 and viii. 14.

[3] R.V.M.

He ordered the restoration of the schools, he rebuilt the temples in various parts of the country. His quarry inscriptions are frequent in the latter part of his reign. In every direction Egypt flourishes."[1]

In confirmation of the above, and as forming a suitable close to this chapter, let me call the attention of my readers to the following inscription of Darius, written in four languages, Persian, Susian, Babylonian and Egyptian, and graved by him on steles set up on the banks of the canal which he had dug from the Nile to the Red Sea, thereby connecting the Mediterranean with the Indian Ocean:

"A great god is Auramazda,[2] who created yonder heaven, who created this earth, who created man, who created the spirit of man, who made Darius king, who assigned the kingdom of king Darius, which is great, which possesses fine horses and fine men. I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, king of countries possessing many people, king of this great earth far and wide, son of Hystaspes, the Achaemenian. Says Darius the king, I am a Persian. Starting forth from Persia[3] I seized Egypt. I commanded to dig this canal from a river which flows through Egypt called Pirava,[4] to the sea which goes from Persia. Thereupon this canal was dug so as I commanded, and ships sailed from Egypt through this canal to Persia so as my will was."[5]

NOTE

For the Ethiopian Dynasty see the Note at the end of chapter xiii. The Saite Dynasty which followed runs thus:

Psammetichus I	664–610 B.C.
Pharaoh Necho	610–594
Psammetichus II	594–589
Pharaoh Hophra	589–570
Amasis	570–526
Psammetichus III	526–525

The few years of Assyrian rule, which followed the fall of Thebes in 663, are not acknowledged either by Menetho or on the monuments.

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[1] *History of Egypt*, vol. iii, p. 365.

[2] The name means "Lord of great knowledge."

[3] Or "with the help of Persia."

[4] The Persian name for the Nile.

[5] Herodotus speaks of "the Arabian Gulf," *i.e.* the Red Sea, as "the gulf whereinto Darius conducted the canal which he made from the Nile." Bk. iv. 39.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE APOCALYPSE OF ISAIAH: CHAPTERS XXIV–XXVII

"Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."—JOEL ii. 28.

IN my last chapter I have referred to the opening verses of Isa. xxv. as coming from the pen of the great prophet whose oracles we have been studying. But I am reminded by our present day commentators that "modern critics are unanimous in denying the Isaianic authorship of this group of prophecies,"[1] viz. chaps. xxiv.-xxvii, and that even the great Delitzsch, though at first he took a different view, was led by the ideas which here find expression to deem this section of the Book post-exilic.[2] Despite this reported consensus of opinion, I shall still endeavour in this closing chapter to maintain the Isaianic authorship of this portion of the Book of Isaiah. But before making the attempt I wish to throw out a suggestion, which first occurred to me in connection with those words of Joel which I have chosen for a heading to this chapter: "your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

In the language of Scripture visions and dreams are sometimes regarded as identical: see Num. xii. 6. Also dreams are spoken of as "visions of the night": Job iv. 13, xx. 8, xxxiii. 15. Daniel receives his prophetic visions sometimes by night, see chaps. ii. 19 and vii. 2; but sometimes also by day, see chaps. viii. 2, ix. 21, and x. 4. From the physiological point of view, however, there is a clear distinction between the two. In the vision, or trance, the action of the ordinary faculties is suspended and superseded by supernatural causes: in the dream, it is suspended and superseded by natural causes. But we may be sure that this distinction was not in Joel's mind: and yet I imagine that in his view also the two are not regarded as identical, and that he had a reason for his choice of words. What, then, was his reason? Joel is a prophet who takes knowledge of human life in its different stages—

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[1] Cent. Bible, *Isaiah*, vol. i, p. 267.

[2] *International Critical Commentary*, *Isaiah*, vol. i, p. 399.

see chaps. i. 2, 3 and ii. 16, as well as the verse now before us—and I take his words to mean that visions suit best the young man and dreams the old man. But how so? Possibly for this reason: the vision looks forward into the future and there is a vividness about it, both of which suit well the enthusiasm of youth. The dream, on the other hand, looks back at the past, and is prompted by events which have happened within the cognisance of the dreamer. I suggest, then, that we have in these chapters the prophetic dreamings of the prophet Isaiah in his old age, and this explains certain points of contact between these apocalypses[1] and the scenes and events of his past life. Again, in our dreams the past rises up before us sharp and clear for the moment, and as quickly grows dim and indistinct. Now this is a very marked feature of these oracles. As Delitzsch well observes, they start from apparently sharply defined historical circumstances, which vanish, however, like will-o'-the-wisps as soon as you attempt to follow and seize them.[2] These oracles, then, are of the nature of dreams; they recall the past in a dreamlike way, and the past which they recall is, as we shall see, an Isaianic past. Lastly, these inspired dreams are the dreams of an old man. This is indicated by certain peculiarities of style which have often been noticed; such as "an accumulation of almost synonymous words and phrases to enhance the effect," "a threefold variation of phrase, a characteristic repetition of words, and a fondness for rhymed endings and for accumulated alliterations." All these are looked upon by the critic as "indications of later style."[3] I suggest that they are indications that the writer is an old man, and that these very features, which appear more sparsely in the prophet's earlier writings and are here met with in abundance, are characteristic of the copiousness and prolixity of age, and are also well suited to the wide, far reaching visions in which they find a place. It is the fashion to speak of these chapters as "reproductive prophecy," composed—or shall I say compiled?—by writers "saturated with the writings of Isaiah." It is a simpler explanation to regard the writer as an aged man, reproducing in a manner suited to old age what he has already produced in the long ago past, saturated with the thoughts which have so long been in his mind, and bringing all to bear on the great and wide future revealed to him by the inspiring Spirit.

But it will perhaps be asked, What is the object of the Holy

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[1] Strictly speaking they are a group of apocalypses rather than a single apocalypse.

[2] Delitzch's *Isaiah*, translated by the Rev. James Martin.

[3] Cent. Bible, *Isaiah*, p. 269. See Note 1 at the end of this chapter.

Spirit in making use of this so-called "reproductive prophecy"? I think the object is to make the circumstances of Isaiah's life, the events which he has witnessed and the experiences through which he has passed, prophetic on a grander scale, and at the same time adapted to comfort God's suffering people all down through the ages, but more especially in the last age; the great tribulation through which Jerusalem has passed and her glorious deliverance being taken as pictures of what is to happen at the end of the present dispensation.

Besides the marked differences in style the Isaianic authorship of these chapters is denied on the ground that they are eschatological and apocalyptic. They certainly are eschatological, for we are here brought face to face with the last things; with judgment poured out on a world in rebellion against God, with the putting down of all opposing powers, and with the final deliverance of the people of God—not the Jews only [1]—from the reign of man's Last Enemy. And they are no less certainly apocalyptic as distinguished from prophetic. The prophecies at which we have been looking were definite predictions directed against different nations, and they received, as we have again and again seen, definite fulfilments. Not so these apocalypses. They concern the world at large, and are indefinite and elusive, capable of countless fulfilments, and doubtless awaiting some crowning fulfilment at the last, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ, "when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power." But other passages in the earlier prophecies of Isaiah are of the same nature. Witness, that lovely picture in chap. ii.—whether originally written by Isaiah, by Micah, or by some unknown prophet—of all nations flowing to Jerusalem to "the mountain of the Lord's house" to worship: or again, that no less lovely idyllic picture given us in chap. xi, of Messiah's kingdom of righteousness and peace. These instances serve to show that this style of prophetic utterance was not unknown in the Isaianic age. Some of the more moderate critics admit this; while others aver that the above passages were not written so early as the time of Isaiah.[2]

We have next to look at those "historical circumstances" referred to by Delitzsch, which, in dreamlike fashion, appear with startling suddenness and then as quickly vanish and are gone; and to inquire whether they are descriptive of the Isaianic age.

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[1] Isa. xxv. 7, 8.

[2] *Int. Crit. Commentary, Isaiah*, vol. i, pp. 44, 214.

First, what is the political situation in the world of Western Asia as here indicated? As shown in my first chapter there are three great world powers: Assyria occupies the first place, and Egypt the third; the second, though unnamed, I have shown to be in all probability Babylon. The writer, then, of this apocalypse, at least in the earlier part of his life belongs to the Assyrian age, which closed with the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. But we must put him further back, for he has known Egypt also as a world power. This, Egypt ceased to be when she was subjugated by Assyria in 663 B.C. And yet further back still; for Babylon also, along with Assyria and Egypt, has been a great power in his day. This carries us back to the reign of Merodach-baladan, 721–710, when all three powers were great together. Judged, then, by chap. xxvii, the aged dreamer has been conversant with this period.

Let us next ask, What was the condition of the Chosen People in the writer's reminiscences? In chap. xxiv. 13, 15 they are described as "in the midst of the earth among the peoples," scattered far and wide, both east and west. "Ah!" cries the critic, "that points to the Exile!" Not necessarily. Look at Isa. xi. 11: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea." This is no post-exilic list, for Assyria stands first and Egypt next, whilst Shinar, *i.e.* Babylonia, the land of Judah's captivity, is only mentioned toward the close, Babylon itself being not mentioned at all. As an actual fact captivity was a dire reality in the days of Isaiah, long before the Exile. Tiglathpileser, who carried captive N. Israel practised it, as we have seen, on a very extensive scale,[1] whilst Sennacherib boasts that he carried away 205,000 persons from Judah. But, replies the critic, the Jews are here described as "poor" and "needy"—see chap. xxv. 4—whilst in xxiv. 2 the priesthood seems to be mentioned as the highest class, an indication, surely, that they are without a king; and are not these marks of the Exile? Yes, the Jews are certainly spoken of as "poor" and "needy," but the same two words are used to describe their condition in the death-year of Ahaz: see chap. xiv. 30, where they are described as "the firstborn of the poor," *i.e.* "the poorest of the poor." As for the inference drawn from chap. xxiv. 2, where the universality of the coming judgment is emphasised in the words, "And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress," etc., whilst it is sufficient to reply that the passage has no particular reference to the Jews, but is spoken of a worldwide judgment which is to overtake all alike, we can also point to the fact that there is one class who are singled out for special punishment, viz. kings and rulers. Had the prophet said "as with subjects, so with their kings," he would virtually have contradicted what he says later on in verse 21, that Jehovah means to single out for *special* punishment "the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth." For here, as in chap. ii. 12, a day of the Lord is to fall with especial severity "upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up."[1] But though chap. xxiv. 2 does not require us to think that when the words were written the Jews were without a king, the language of xxvi. 13, "O Jehovah, our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us," certainly points to a state of vassalage as within the experience of the writer. This, indeed, was the condition of Judah during the greater part of Isaiah's ministry. From 735 B.C., when Ahaz called in the help of Tiglathpileser, down probably to the accession of Sennacherib in 705, Judah was a vassal of Assyria.[2] Besides vassalage, the Chosen People, as we have seen, experienced captivity in the days of Isaiah; and along with captivity, and indeed as a consequence of it, came depopulation; whilst as the tide of Assyrian invasion flowed onwards, it brought with it diminution of territory. Isaiah had witnessed these calamities both in Israel and in Judah, and had foretold their reversal. In chap. ix. 3 we read, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy"; and in xxxiii. 17 the promise is given, "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold a far-stretching land." Note, then, an echo of these predictions in chap. xxvi. 15: "Thou hast increased the nation, O Jehovah, thou hast increased the nation: thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land."

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[1] See Chapter VIII.

We turn next to notice the terms employed to describe the enemies of God's people. In chap. xxv. 2–5 they are described as "strangers," and as "the terrible ones," and their city is spoken of as "the city of the terrible nations." These are the terms which Isaiah employs to describe the enemies of Judah, more particularly the Assyrians. Thus in chap. i. 7 we read, "your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers"; whilst in xxix. 5 the vast host besieging Ariel is described as "the multitude of thy foes"—lit. "strangers" for it is the same word in the original—and also as "the multitude of the terrible ones," and a little later as "the multitude of all the nations."

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[1] In the Targum on Isa. xxiv. an allusion to the special guilt of the rulers finds a place in the opening verse, which reads thus: "Behold the Lord shall spoil the land and deliver it over to the enemy; and confusion shall cover the faces of the princes, because they have transgressed the law, and scattered its inhabitants."

[2] She became again a vassal during the reign of Esarhaddon, 681–668 B.C.

In the song of praise in which the above terms occur we meet with the remarkable words, "Thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin; a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built." If the terms used remind us of the Assyrians, the above passage may have been suggested to the dreamer's mind by the recollection of some disaster having overtaken a fortress-palace garrisoned by the Assyrians. Now the word here translated "palace," though of frequent occurrence in the Book of Amos, occurs only twice in the Books of Kings, and is used in either case of the fortress-palace of the kings of Israel, first in Tirzah, 1 Kings xvi. 18, and afterwards in Samaria, 2 Kings xv. 25.[1] When Samaria fell in 722 B.C., this palace would probably be used as the residence of the Assyrian governor—see Micah v. 5—and as such, when rebellion broke out two years later, would naturally become the object of attack, and, being now looked upon as a sign of hostile domination, may have been razed to the ground. Beside this mention of "a palace of strangers" we read also of "the city of the terrible nations," and our thoughts travel at once to great Nineveh as suggesting this figure of the imperial world-power which is to be subjugated to the Kingdom of God: "the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee." Again, in chap. xxiv. 10 come the words, "the city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in"; and in the original the words as well as the syntax remind one strongly of the description given in xxiii. 1 of the desolation of Tyre, which may be rendered thus: "Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, so that no man may come in." But whilst these cities of the world are mentioned incidentally, there is one city which receives something more than an incidental notice. In chap. xxv. 12, in a passage in which Moab symbolises an opposing power, occur the words, "And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls hath he brought down, laid low, and brought to the ground, even to the dust"; and then again in xxvi. 5 the prophet recurs to the same topic, "For he hath brought down them that dwell on high, the lofty city he layeth it low even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust." There can be little doubt as to the city which called up the above figure. At the far south of the Dead Sea, visible from Jerusalem though fifty miles away, rises on its lofty rock "Kir of Moab,"[1] the modern Kerak, famous in Crusading times, and the Kir-haraseth of 2 Kings iii. which the three kings found it impossible to take. If, as I am inclined to think, the Burden of Moab in chaps. xv. and xvi. is Isaiah's own prophecy, and not borrowed by him, then the fall of this fortress, which he there predicts, adding in the postscript that it will take place at the end of three years, furnishes one of the figures which find a place in this apocalypse.[2] But why is Moab thus singled out? Because of her towering pride, of which that lofty citadel forms so apt a symbol. This is emphasised in chap. xvi. 6, where, after Moab's appeal to Zion for protection for her fugitives, comes the ominous reply, "We have heard of the pride of Moab, that he is very proud; even of his arrogancy, and his pride, and his wrath." As Moab is here singled out as the picture of a proud opposing power, so in chap. xxxiv. 5, 6 Edom is singled out as the picture of a persecuting power, most cruel to those to whom by ties of blood she is most nearly related. This too falls well within the knowledge of the prophet Isaiah. It was in his childhood probably that Amos foretold a punishment coming upon Edom "because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever."[3] Then, in his early manhood, in the days of Ahaz, came an Edomite invasion, thus recorded by the Chronicler, "again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives":[4] mark that word "again," as if pointing back to the cruelties denounced by Amos. There is, therefore, no need to assign this apocalypse to the time of the fall of Jerusalem before the arms of Nebuchadnezzar, when the Edomites cried, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof";[5] seeing that the cruelty of Edom, no less than the pride of Moab, were things known and experienced long before.

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[1] Cf. R.V.M.

Beside "the city of the terrible nations," "the palace of strangers," "the city of confusion," and Moab's towering fortress, there is another city of whose identity we can entertain no doubt whatever. Chap. xxvi. opens with the words, "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city, salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks," and we know at once that the prophet's thoughts are turning back to that which has formed the theme of so many of his prophecies: Jehovah's deliverance of Jerusalem from the arms of Sennacherib. Moreover, the mention of " the land of Judah " makes us suspect that his words have something more than a spiritual signification, viz. that the Church's song of praise for deliverance from her foes will break forth first in the land of Judah. This suspicion is confirmed when we turn back to chap. xxv, where the threefold repetition of the words " in this mountain " points us to a definite spot on this earth as destined to be once again the scene of the manifestation of Divine power: this is specially intimated in the words " in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest," for the hand of God signifies nothing less than His power. And going still further back to the close of chap. xxiv, we are there assured that Zion is to be the scene of a manifestation of Divine glory so bright that " the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed; for Jehovah of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." But in what way will Jehovah manifest forth His glory at Jerusalem? He intends to make there a sacrificial feast—the figure is taken from the Peace-offering—to which He invites all peoples, not the Jews only. With the New Testament in our hands how easily can we see what it all means! At Jerusalem will be offered the Great Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. There the Gospel Supper will be spread, concerning which our Saviour said: " Come; for all things are now ready." This is the " feast of fat things " of which the prophet speaks. Now notice how the Spirit leads him to follow up this figure with another apparently little connected with it: " And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations." What veil is this? The veil of mourning and sadness: compare 2 Sam. xix. 5 (4), where a cognate verb is used; or, better still, the veil of ignorance, which hides from men's view the life of the world to come. Either of these interpretations goes well with the words which follow: " He hath swallowed up death for ever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it." The atoning Death of Christ, which took place at Jerusalem, is the brightest manifestation we possess of the glory of God. It brings sinful man into communion with God, so that spiritually he can feast on the Divine Peace-offering, provided by the death of Him who is " our peace."[1] The Saviour's atoning death was to be followed by His " glorious resurrection," whereby He hath " abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel."[2]

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[1] Isa. xv. 1.

[2] See Note 3 at the end of this chapter.

[3] Amos i. 11.

[4] 2 Chron. xxviii. 17.

[5] Ps. cxxxvii. 7.

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[1] Eph. ii. 14.

[2] 2 Tim. i. 10.

This was the unveiling of the nations. How true, then, are Isaiah's words, spoken in a time of terrible distress and sorrow, and spoken in the first instance of the Jews only, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined"!

Such was the grand fulfilment that awaited this part of the Isaianic Apocalypse. In tracing it out I have wandered somewhat from my object, which was to show that in these chapters we have the prophetic dreams of the prophet Isaiah. Let me now retrace my steps. As we have already seen there are many links in these chapters with the prophecies at which we have been looking, and it will be well for us now to institute a comparison of the way in which certain subjects are treated in this Apocalypse and in those prophecies. Let us begin with the subject of idolatry as brought before us in chap. xxvii. 7–11. We are there told that the Almighty has removed Israel "with his rough blast in the day of the east wind," and that this is the terrible result of her idolatry; her "altars," "*asherim*," and "sun-images" being especially mentioned. Because of this sin her fenced cities are described as "solitary," "deserted and forsaken," ruinous and overgrown. "Therefore he that *made* them"—mark the word—"will not have compassion upon them and he that formed them will show them no favour." Now in chap. xvii. 4–9, where the reference is to the Ten Tribes, we find the same subject treated in the same manner. The same three words are used to describe Israel's idolatry; the Almighty is described as Israel's Maker, from whom she had turned away to worship that which her own fingers have made; and the punishment for her idolatry is described in similar terms: "In that day shall his strong cities be as the forsaken places in the wood and on the mountain top, which were forsaken from before the children of Israel: and it shall be a desolation." Here, then, are three points of contact in passages dealing with the same subject.

Let us take next the dispersion of Israel, which had already begun to take place even in the earlier years of Isaiah's ministry. In chap. xxiv. 13–15 Israel is pictured as scattered far and wide "in the midst of the earth among the peoples," like the few scattered olives on the outmost branches that still remain to be beaten off the tree. This is the same figure which Isaiah adopts in chap. xvii. 6 to portray the scanty, scattered population left in the land of the Ten Tribes after the campaigns of Tiglathpileser: "Yet there shall be left therein gleanings, as the shaking"—or rather "beating"—"of an olive, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost branches of a fruitful tree, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel."

Observe in the next place a remarkable phrase used to express the part that Israel will presently take in becoming a blessing to the nations. In chap. xxvii. 6 we read, "In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud: and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit." The words remind us at once of Isaiah's message to Hezekiah in the crisis of the siege: "the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." The promise there given to the remnant that was "to go forth out of mount Zion,"[1] is here taken, enlarged, and given to the nation in exile. Captivity on a wholesale scale was, as we have seen, a novel expedient initiated by Tiglathpileser. It was this monarch who placed some of his Israelite captives in "the cities of the Medes,"[2] cities, which, as he himself states, he had rebuilt on the Median frontier.[3] Now it is charged against this tyrant that he had *filled the face of the world* with cities,[4] and here it is foretold that exiled Israel shall presently "blossom and bud, and *fill the face of the world* with fruit." Israel from the cities of their dispersion are to become a blessing to the world at large. To some this connecting chain of thought may seem fanciful, but they will at any rate admit that in the repetition of this striking phrase lies one indication among many of the Isaianic authorship of these chapters.

The crisis of the siege of Jerusalem finds its echo, or reflection, in chap. xxvi. 16–18, where the experience of the Divine chastening is compared to the pains and peril of childbirth. Hezekiah in his message to Isaiah had used very similar language: see chap. xxxvii. 3. In chap. x. 24, 25 that crisis is thus foretold: "O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall be accomplished, and mine anger, in their destruction." With the tender tone of this passage, as well as with the terms employed, compare the language of chap. xxvi. 20: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Surely these two utterances come from the same lips. There are many other points of contact between these chapters and those which we have been studying—most of them of a verbal or grammatical character—which will be found in Note 2 at the end of this chapter. Meanwhile, let us pass on to notice the Isaianic mentality of the author of this Apocalypse, for this is one of the proofs that we are reading the utterances of the great prophet himself.

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[1] Isa. xxxvii. 31, 32.

[2] 2 Kings xvii. 6.

[3] Tablet Inscription from Nimrûd, line 36.

[4] Isa. xiv. 21.

In chap. xxiv. 16 the prophet hears from afar the voices of Jewish exiles, singing "Glory to the Righteous," *i.e.* to the Righteous Nation. "Glory," or rather "beauty," Heb. *tzebhi*, is here used figuratively of that physical beauty which is the sign of perfect health and vigour. Now the prophet, identifying himself with his own people, and constituting himself their representative, cannot accept this optimistic view of their condition. He cannot join in these premature rejoicings. To him the immediate future appears very dark. The song of his fellow-countrymen only draws from him an agitated cry, couched in language similar to that which we meet in chaps. xxi. 2 and xxxiii. 1: "But I said, I pine away, I pine away, woe is me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously." Is not this the same state of mind which meets us in chap. xxii. 1–4? There, all around him in the tumultuous, joyous city is nothing but boisterous mirth; yet Isaiah can see nothing to rejoice over, but far otherwise, so that their joy only increases his distress: "Therefore, said I, Look, away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me for the spoiling of the daughter of my people." But though in the passage before us the immediate future seems very dark, yet the storm of judgment passes over and the light returns, so that he who could not join in the song, "Glory to the Righteous," is presently able to tell how in the day of deliverance a very similar song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; salvation will he appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in."[1] Now this is in effect the same message, and surely from the lips of the same messenger, as that which meets us from chap. i. onwards: Zion, which had "become an harlot,"[2] is to be "redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness."[3]

Take another instance. We see in these chapters a man of strong faith, whose own blessed experience leads him to strengthen and encourage others. Thus in chap. xxvi. 3,[4] he tells us what he has himself realised: "A stedfast mind thou keepest in perfect peace, because it trusteth in thee," and then adds the earnest exhortation, "Trust ye in Jehovah for ever: for in Jah Jehovah is an everlasting rock." This is the same calm, intrepid spirit, which said to the faithless nation, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength":[1] the same spirit, too, which looked forward to a happier time when "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever."[2]

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[1] Isa. xxvi. 1, 2.
[2] Isa. i. 21.
[3] Isa. i. 27.
[4] R.V.M.

NOTE 1

On the difference of style in Isaiah, chapters xxiv.–xxvii.

The critics rightly point out the following: the threefold variation of phrase (xxiv. 4, 8, 19): the fondness in the original for rhymed endings (xxiv. 1, 8, 16, xxv. 1, 6, foll., xxvi. 2, 13, 20 foll., xxvii. 3, 5), and for alliterations accumulated together (xxiv. 1, 3 foll., 6, 13–19, xxv. 6, 10, xxvi. 3, xxvii. 7): and further the characteristic repetition of a word (xxiv. 16, xxv. 1, xxvi. 3, 5, 15, xxvii. 5).[3] These peculiarities, however, which give a character of its own to this section of the Book, form no real bar whatever to our believing in its Isaianic authorship. They occur, though in a lesser degree, in Isaiah's other writings. Thus in the Burden of Babylon we meet with such assonances as *kĕshōd mishshaddai*, chap. xiii. 6, and *ōqîr . . . ōphîr*, xiii. 12; whilst in xxii. 5 comes the rhyming alliteration, *mĕhūmâh ū-mĕbhūsâh ū-mĕbhūkâh*, and later in the same verse *mĕqarqar qir*, in which we seem to hear the crashing of the town wall beneath the stroke of the ram. A little later in the same chapter we notice the words addressed to Shebna, *tsânōph yitsnâphkâ tsĕnēphâh*, translated "he will surely turn and toss thee." In the Burden of the Wilderness of the Sea, chap. xxi. 2, comes the pleasing assonance *'alî 'Eylam*, "Go up, O *Elam!*" Again in chap. xxix.—which all will grant to be Isaianic—occurs in verse 2 the assonance *tha' anîyyâh, va'anîyyâh* which Cheyne renders "moaning and bemoaning," and in verse 9, *hithmâhmĕhū ū-thĕmâhū hishta'ash'ū vâshō'ū* "Tarry ye and wonder; take your pleasure and be blind." Then, for repetitions compare chap. xvii. 12, 13, where "it is difficult in an English translation to express the full meaning and power of sound conveyed by the original."[4] Another distinctive mark of the chapters now before us is said to be "a frequent combination of nearly synonymous clauses without connecting conjunctions."[5] This is also a marked feature of chap. xiv.: see verses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, etc. It appears likewise in the Burden of Tyre, chap. xxiii. 13, in the vivid description there given of Assyrian ravages in Chaldea. See also chaps. xvii. 14 and xxxiii. 9. The fact is that the omission of connecting words belongs to poetry and is the natural concomitant of a vivid impassioned style, especially when describing anything surprising and startling. Finally, may it not also be urged that the difference of subject, as well as the very character of these apocalyptic utterances, seem almost to demand a certain difference of style?

[1] Isa. xxx. 15.

[2] Isa. xxxii. 17.

[3] Cent. Bible, Isaiah, p. 269.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 222.

[5] So Driver in Peake's *Commentary*, p. 453, col. 1.

NOTE 2

Minor points of contact between chapters xxiv.–xxvii. and other chapters in the earlier part of the Book of Isaiah

Chap. xxiv. 6: *miz‘âr* "few," found only in x. 25, xvi. 14, and xxix. 17.

xxiv. 10: "the city of confusion," cf. xxxiv. 11 "the line of confusion."

xxiv. 10: "that no man may come in," Heb. *mibbo'*, rendered in xxiii. 1, "so that there is no entering in." The use of the pronoun *min* "from" along with a gerundive expressed or understood, to denote a negative, is very frequent in the earlier part of this Book. Cf. v. 6, vii. 8, viii. 11, xvii. 1, xxi. 3, xxiii. 1, xxv. 2.

xxiv. 12: *she'iyyâh* "destruction," only found here. The verb occurs six times out of seven in the utterances of Isaiah.

xxiv. 13: *nōqeph* "shaking," found only here and in xvii. 6.

xxiv. 14: "the majesty of the LORD," cf. ii. 10, 19, 21.

xxiv. 15, 16: "the isles of the sea," "the uttermost part [lit. 'wing'] of the earth." For the same conjunction of words cf. xi. 11, 12, where "four corners" is lit. "four wings."

xxiv. 20: *mĕlūnâh* "hut," in i. 8 "booth"; found nowhere else in the O.T.

xxiv. 22: *bōr* "the pit," here as in xiv. 15 of Sheol, regarded as a place of confinement for erstwhile potentates.

xxiv. 22: "after many days shall they be visited," cf. xxiii. 17.

xxiv. 23: *lĕbhânâh* "moon," *khammâh* "sun"; two uncommon poetical words, found in conjunction only here, in xxx. 26, and in Cant. vi. 10.

xxv. 2: *mappēlâh* "ruin," found only here and in xxiii. 13.

xxv. 4: "refuge," "storm," "shadow," "heat," all found in iv. 6, a very similar passage. In xxxii. 2, another similar passage, we find "tempest" ("storm") and "shadow."

xxv. 5: *tsâyōn* "dry place," only here and in xxxii. 2.

xxv. 9: "we have waited for him" . . . "his salvation," cf. xxxiii. 2—where the thought is similar—and xxvi. 8.

xxvi. 4: "Jah Jehovah," a combination only found here and in xii. 2. On the latter passage the Cambridge Bible observes, "Since the LXX and other versions have only one Divine Name, it is probable that the second came in through confusion with the following consonants." But be it noticed that both in Exod. xv. 2 and xvii. 16, where Jah is found in the Hebrew, it is similarly omitted in the LXX.

xxvi. 5: "them that dwell on high"; clearly not spoken of the angels.

xxvi. 10: *gē'ūth* "majesty," found in ix. 17, xii. 5, xxviii. 1, 3, and thrice in the Psalms, but nowhere else.

xxvi. 11: "they shall see thy zeal for the people," *i.e.* Jehovah's jealous, watchful care for His chosen people. Cf. the twice-repeated words "the zeal of Jehovah of hosts shall perform this": ix. 7 and xxxvii. 32.

xxvi. 14: *rephâ'ûn* "deceased," in xiv. 9 "the dead"; used there as here of departed rulers.

xxvii. 3: "every moment," cf. xxxiii. 2 "every morning," and xxvii. 12 "one by one," lit. "by ones": all forming examples of the rather uncommon use of the preposition *l* as a distributive. Note and contrast the earlier vineyard-song in v. 1–7, of which this is the counterpart.

xxvii. 4: *shâmīr shayith* "briers and thorns." This combination occurs in v. 6, vii. 24, 25, ix. 18, x. 17; but nowhere else. For the burning of thorns cf. ix. 18 and xxxiii. 12.

19 xxvii. 12: *yakhbōdh* "shall beat off," only here and in xxviii. 27, where it is rendered "beat out."

NOTE 3

The Burden of Moab

We find in the Apocalypse of Isaiah a reflection of events which had happened during the prophet's lifetime and which came within his cognisance, such as the wonderful deliverance of Jerusalem from her foes. It may, therefore, be rightly argued that the language used in chap. xxv. 10–12, and which points unmistakably to the fortress of Kerak, warrants us in thinking that during his period of prophetic activity some great, though not fatal, disaster overtook the Moabites. This conjecture is confirmed by the Burden of Moab: chaps. xv. and xvi.; where it is foretold that Ar of Moab and Kir of Moab (Kerak) will be captured by a night surprise. We learn from the Historical Books that Moab was tributary to Israel, but recovered her independence after the death of Ahab, and this fact is borne out by the inscription on the Moabite Stone.[1] In the days of Jeroboam II Israel regained her ascendancy,[2] and seems to have maintained it down to the time when the Trans-Jordanic tribes were carried captive by Tiglathpileser in 732 B.C.[3] This act on the part of Assyria appears to have afforded Moab the opportunity to enlarge her border northwards, so that in the Isaianic Burden towns far north of the Arnon, such as Heshbon and Elealeh and even Jazer, are seen to be in Moabite hands. By this northward advance Moab, whose king, Salamanu, had paid tribute to Tiglathpileser in 732, may well have incurred the wrath of Assyria. The predicted attack on Moab, which is to result in the capture of her two chief fortresses, is to come apparently from the East, since the terrified Moabites are described as flying, some of them South across "the waters of Nimrim"[4] into Edom, some North across the Arnon to seek a refuge in Judah.[5] How easily might the Assyrian during the three years' siege of Samaria, 734–732 B.C., have sent an armed force down to the east side of Jordan to attack Moab in the rear and by a night surprise to capture her two fortresses! That the unnamed enemy was Assyria may be gathered from the deep sympathy which the prophet manifests for the Moabites.[1] Of the fulfilment of this prophecy no record is left us. The reign of Shalmaneser V (727–722) is a blank in the Assyrian records. That he made warlike expeditions we know from the Assyrian Eponym Lists, but the names of the countries attacked are obliterated. An extract from Menander, quoted by Josephus, tells of a five years' blockade of the Island-Tyre,[2] and the Bible records a three years' siege of Samaria. But this is all we know. The prophet's advice to Moab is to send tribute to the Divine "ruler of the land" who dwells in "the mount of the daughter of Zion." If they place themselves under the Theocratic king, whose throne is established in righteousness, they will escape the predicted terror and destruction.[3] But this, as he foresees, Moab's pride will not allow her to do. She still clings with blind devotion to her god Chemosh, therefore the threatened judgment must overtake her.[4]

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[1] See lines 3, 4, 8, 9.
[2] 2 Kings xiv. 25.
[3] 1 Chron. v. 6, 26.
[4] Tristram, *Land of Moab*, pp. 56, 57.
[5] Isa. xvi. 3–5.

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[1] Isa. xv. 5 and xvi. 9.

[2] See Chapter XVII, p. 185.

[3] Isa. xvi 1, 5: cf. of his advice to Philistia, xiv. 32.

[4] Isa. xv. 2 and xvi. 12.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE RESURRECTION HOPE

> "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of light, and the earth shall cast forth the shades."—ISA. xxvi. ~~99~~ 19, R.V.M.

WITH such accumulated evidence of the Isaianic authorship of Isa. xxiv.-xxvii. as I have brought forward in the last chapter my readers will very naturally ask, What is it that prevents the critics regarding these chapters as coming from the pen of the prophet Isaiah? The answer is that they see in this section of the Book of Isaiah two doctrines which they affirm to belong to a later age, viz. the doctrine of Angelic Patrons of nations, and the doctrine of a Resurrection of the Dead.

The first of these doctrines they descry in the words of Isa. xxiv. 21: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth." Now it must be freely owned that at first sight these words seem to present a double antithesis, and so to teach the doctrine of Angelic Rulers guiding and directing the actions of earthly rulers: see Dan. x. 13 and xii. 1. But there are some strong objections to this interpretation of the verse, *e.g.* the words of the next verse, "And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison," appear to refer to one class of persons only; so that we are led to the conclusion that both clauses must refer to the same parties, and that "the host of the high ones on high" and "the kings of the earth upon the earth" instead of being contrasts are parallels, and hence the verbal repetition which finds a place in each clause. Further, that such is the true meaning of the verse may be gathered from the general tenor of these chapters, where the humbling of the high and mighty, whether nations or rulers, forms a frequent topic. Compare xxiv. 4, xxv. 3, 5, 10–12, xxvi. 5, 6, 13, 14, and xxvii. 1. However, by far the strongest argument lies in a comparison of this verse with verse 4 of the same chapter. Those who are here called "the host of the high ones on high," literally "the host of the *height* on the *height*," being there styled "the lofty people of the earth," literally "the *height* of the people of the earth."

But it will still be asked: How do we account for the use of the word "host"? surely this must mean the angels? Not necessarily. "The host of heaven" may mean the angelic host as in 1 Kings xxii. 19, but it may also mean the starry host as in Deut. iv. 19; and still further, *the starry host employed as an emblem of earthly rulers.* That such is the meaning here may be gathered from a similar apocalyptic passage in chap. xxxiv, being the only other passage in the earlier part of the Book of Isaiah in which the word *tzabhâ* "host" is found, always excepting the oft-recurring title "Jehovah of hosts." In chap. xxxiv. 2–4 we read, "For Jehovah hath indignation against all the nations, and fury against all their host: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and the stink of their carcases shall come up, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a fading leaf from the fig tree." Here, we might suppose at first sight that "their host" in verse 2 means their armies; although in that case we should have expected the plural "hosts." Verse 4, however, makes it plain that "their host" means their rulers as symbolised by the starry host; the fall of stars picturing the fall of rulers, and the heavens being rolled together as a scroll the breaking up of all government and of the framework of society.[1] These two passages are not the only places in this Book where rulers are compared to stars. In the Burden of Babylon, Isa. xiv. 12, 13, we find a falling star used as the figure of the sudden downfall of a great earthly ruler. In that same chapter the shades of departed kings, gathered together as here in the "pit" or prison-house of the nether world, greet the entry of the great king of Babylon into their midst with the taunting words, "Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? . . . How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning? . . . And thou saidst in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." What is the meaning of these last words? Surely this: that the tyrant deserves his sudden fall because of his towering ambition—he was bent on exalting his throne above "the stars of God,"[2] *i.e.* above his fellow-kings; but now he is become weak as they are, and is in the same "pit" with them, only in its "uttermost parts," its darkest recesses.

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[1] Cf. Matt. xxiv. 29, and Rev. vi. 13.

[2] The addition of the Divine Name conveys in Hebrew the idea of might and excellence, see Pss. xxxvi. 6 and lxxx. 10.

If, then, we seek to interpret Isa. xxiv. 21 in the light afforded by verse 4 of the same chapter as well as by two kindred passages in chaps. xxxiv. and xiv, we shall, I think, come to the conclusion that there is no reference in that verse to angelic patrons of nations such as we find in the Book of Daniel, and that "the host of the height" are after all only earthly rulers. This is the view of Calvin as given in Pole's *Synopsis:* "Sensum loci est nullam fore tam sublimem potentiam quae vindictam Dei effugiet." To the same effect is the paraphrase of the Chaldee Targum: "The Lord shall punish the mighty host that is dwelling in power, and the kings, the sons of men, who are dwelling upon the earth," where by repeating the word "dwelling" the Targumist shows that he regards the two clauses as parallels.

We turn now to the second doctrine which in the judgment of the critics must needs compel us to assign this Apocalypse to a later age, viz. the doctrine of a Resurrection. According to a writer in *The International Critical Commentary*, "the ideas that find expression here point to the post-exilic period; and with probability, indeed, to a very late part of that period. The difficulty, indeed, when we consider these, is not to decide whether we are dealing with a pre-exilic or a post-exilic work, but to see how any part of the prophetic canon can be late enough to contain them. The entirely explicit and well-established belief in the resurrection of individual Israelites (xxvi. 19) carries us far below Ezekiel, beyond the Book of Job, and into the region of Daniel and Enoch (*i.e.* 165 B.C. and later)." [1] In opposition to the above view I propose to show, first, that there is no reason whatever why the prophet Isaiah should not believe in a resurrection; and secondly, that the promise of a resurrection *from* the dead, *i.e.* of faithful Israelites, found in Isa. xxvi. 19, is placed in a peculiarly Isaianic setting, and should, therefore, be looked upon as a genuine utterance of the great prophet.

That there existed among mankind from the very first the hope of a resurrection, may be argued on two grounds. First, on the ground of Natural Religion; for death is so like sleep, that men would early begin to think that as there is an awaking from sleep, so there might possibly be an awaking from the sleep of death. That they did so think," is evidenced by the word "Awake" in the promise at which we are looking, as well as in other passages, and also in the frequent description of death as sleep.[1] Again, in the death of vegetation in the world of Nature, whether caused by drought or by the cold of winter, and in its astonishing revival on the return of spring or the falling of timely rains, mankind had presented to them from the first a picture of resurrection, which, as the legend of Ishtar and Tammuz shows, failed not to make a deep impression even on the heathen world. Secondly, turning to Revealed Religion, as exhibited to us in the Old Testament, it is impossible not to see in the first promise of a Saviour, given at the time of the Fall, this blessed doctrine, lying embedded like precious metal in the ore. The Serpent, we read, has led man into sinful disobedience, and death is the punishment for that disobedience: but the Seed of the Woman will one day undo the Serpent's work, *i.e.* He will put an end to the reign of Sin and Death. To put an end to the reign of death can mean nothing less than a resurrection. As then Natural Religion from the first gave the hope of a resurrection, so Revealed Religion from the first contained the promise of a resurrection. Accordingly, there is nothing extraordinary in David saying "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness": nothing extraordinary in Abraham believing, as we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews,[2] that if his son Isaac were slain on the altar God could raise him to life again.

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[1] In my work, *In and Around the Book of Daniel*, I have endeavoured to show that that Book belongs to the age of Daniel, viz. to the latter part of the sixth century B.C.

According to the latest discoveries it appears that even the heathen people who lived in Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's birthplace, at least a thousand years before the date of the patriarch, entertained after their fashion the belief in a resurrection. The recent excavations at the desert mound of Al-'Ubaid, some four miles W.N.W. of the site of Ur, have revealed the lower courses of a *ziggurat*, or temple-tower, standing in the midst of two cemeteries, one prehistoric, the other belonging to the close of the fourth millennium B.C. This tower is shown by an inscription found on the spot to have been dedicated to the Sumerian goddess Nin-khursaig, "the lady of the mountain," the wife of the young god known to the Babylonians as Tammuz. Writing on the discovery of cemeteries grouped around this tower, Mr. C. J. Gadd of the British Museum, one of the excavators, makes the following observations: "The goddess, who (like Hathor in the Theban necropolis) dwelt in the midst of the dead at Al-'Ubaid, was at once universal mother, wife of the god with whose annual death nature loses its vigour, traveller to the under-world to seek the vanished god, restorer of the sick to health and of the dead to life. In these beliefs there seems to lie ample reason for the presence of cemeteries at Al-'Ubaid." Then, speaking of the dead, he adds, "they are buried about the shrine of Nin-khursaig, the goddess who was able to rescue them from the under-world and from the death which had overtaken them."[1] But this is not all that Al-'Ubaid has to teach us. Mr. C. L. Woolley, director of the expedition, who examined the graves in the prehistoric cemetery, writes thus: "from the fact that there were placed beside it," viz. the body, "food vessels, personal ornaments, and tools, the simple furnishings that a man needs in this life, we can understand that they believed in a future life wherein such would be required."[2]

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[1] Cf. Pss. xiii. 3, lxxvi. 5, 6, Jer. li. 39, John xi. 11, also 2 Kings iv. 31, Ps. xvii. 15, Dan. xii. 2.

[2] Heb. xi. 19.

We may now take another instance of belief in a resurrection, which comes to us from Egypt about the middle of the long centuries which separate the date of the *ziggurat* at Al-'Ubaid from the era Anno Domini. In *The Illustrated London News* for October 6, 1928, will be found on the front page a picture described as "A peculiar symbol of resurrection from Tutankhamen's tomb: a germinating figure of Osiris, formed of Nile silt, planted with corn moistened for sprouting." This picture is further described in the letter-press as "a wooden framework, which was moulded and hollowed out into the form of the god, covered with linen, and filled with silt from the bed of the Nile, in which corn was planted. The corn was moistened so that it sprouted, and thus became a symbol of resurrection, both of the god and of the dead king." The spade of the excavator has thus helped to prove what might have been expected both on the ground of Natural, and of Revealed Religion, viz. that the belief in a resurrection, however much it may at times have been obscured, existed all down through the ages.

The researches of modern scholars seem to point in the same direction. Prof. Langdon, an expert in the ancient Sumerian language, in his book entitled *Ishtar and Tammuz*, observes that "it would not be venturesome to assert that this mystic cult of death and resurrection is one of the earliest forms of worship known to us, and so far as our sources permit us to speak, precedes the lower form of incantation and magic." This earlier form of the Tammuz worship Langdon characterises as "theological speculation." But the very antiquity of the cult, coupled with the fact that as time went on it deteriorated, leads us to think that there may have been something better at the back of it—that it arose in fact not merely from observation of the wonders wrought by the return of Spring life after the death of Winter, but from some tradition of the primaeval promise made to our first parents of the coming Conqueror of Death. St. Paul tells us that the heathen, wandering off into polytheism, " became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened," so that they began to worship the works of God instead of worshipping God Himself. Hence, the change in the world of Nature, offering in itself a beautiful parable of the Resurrection, was turned into an object of worship, which gradually degenerated into yet lower forms ; a worship which we find both in Babylonia and in Egypt, the two most ancient centres in the history of mankind.

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[1] *Ur Excavations*, vol. i, Al-'Ubaid, p. 146.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 154.

But if the heathen thus possessed the Resurrection Hope under a more or less obscured form, the descendants of Abraham, whose ancestor had come forth out of idolatry, had something better to go by, and therefore, so far as they were guided by their Sacred Records, possessed a clearer view of things. There is, therefore, no sufficient reason for thinking that the Jews were uninformed on this point, and still less that it is impossible for us to suppose that a writer of the Isaianic age knew anything about the resurrection. The light that was visible ages before in the heathen world must have shone far more brightly among the Jews.

It being granted, then, that the promise of a resurrection found in Isa. xxvi. 19 may quite well belong to the Isaianic age, I shall endeavour in the rest of this chapter to show that the setting in which we find that promise is so peculiarly Isaianic that we are compelled to regard the words as an utterance of the great prophet himself.

As already noticed depopulation was a feature of the Isaianic times. Isaiah was commissioned to prophesy " until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without men, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land." This coming depopulation he himself proclaimed as a special message from God : " In mine ears *saith* Jehovah of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair without inhabitant." [1] To Ahaz he declared that the typical Immanuel would grow up in a land where, owing to the scantiness of the population and the fact that the land had gone out of cultivation, butter and the honey of the wild bees would be plentiful." [2] To his eldest son he gave the name Shear-jashub, " a remnant shall return " ; which in a later utterance he explains to mean that after Jehovah had accomplished His punitive work on the rebellious nation, a remnant, only a remnant, would be left to return to the mighty God. These predictions of depopulation on account of transgression are found re-echoed on a vaster scale in chap. xxiv. 6: "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are found guilty; therefore the inhabitants of the world are burned,[1] and few men left." But along with these visions of depopulation, which he lived to see fulfilled to the letter, Isaiah had other and brighter visions of the Messianic times, when, after an end had been put to war, the nation would be multiplied and their joy increased;[2] when the king would be seen in his beauty, and Judah would be yet again a far-stretching land.[3] These happier visions, re-echoed as we have seen in chap. xxvi. 15, he lived to see fulfilled only in part. Judah's king was no longer humbled,[4] her territory was no longer limited to a single city; the borders of the land were enlarged; but where was the promised increase of the population? Can we wonder, then, that the prophet's musings soon fall back into a minor key, and that, after speaking with rapture of the promised increase as if a thing already present, he should awake to the actual state of things and go on to use language prompted by a recollection of the dark days of the siege: "O Jehovah," he cries, "in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out (or rather "whispered")[5] a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." Then, after making use of the figure of childbirth to describe all that the nation has gone through,[6] he gives vent to deep disappointment, and complains that after all it has been only a case of false pregnancy: "We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen." Here is a recollection of the times after the overthrow of Sennacherib's army. It is true the crisis is over, and the invader gone. Judah is no longer a vassal kingdom; the "other lords"[7] no longer have dominion over her, but they have not "fallen"; the Assyrian is still a mighty power, and how can a depopulated little kingdom ever hope to hold its own should that power be led to attempt a second invasion? This train of thought, called up by the past and recurring to him as he looks out on the stage of the future, casts him down into the depths, out of which he arises with surprising suddenness as light breaks in through the gloom and the heart-cheering thought flashes upon his spirit that with God all things

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[1] Isa. v. 9.

[2] Isa. vii. 15.

[1] Viz. by the hot anger of Jehovah, cf. Isa. v. 25.

[2] Isa. ix. 3, 5.

[3] Isa. xxxiii. 17.

[4] 2 Chron. xxxii. 23.

[5] Cf. Isa. xxix. 4.

[6] Cf. Hezekiah's words to Isaiah, chap. xxxvii. 3.

[7] Isa. xxvi. 13.

are possible; that God can, and will, raise the faithful dead to life again. Looking up therefore to Jehovah, he cries, " Thy dead shall live " : looking around at his death-stricken land, he adds, " my dead bodies shall arise " : then, addressing the dead, he calls to them, " Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew (O Jehovah) is as the dew of light, and the earth shall cast forth [or rather ' give birth to '] the shades." [1] The words mean that the " shades," or disembodied spirits, of the faithful will rise again with bodies. The words " my dead bodies," in which the prophet claims the dead as his own, and indeed as a part of himself,[2] exhibit the same characteristic which we have already noticed in chap. xxiv. 16. The prophet, here as there, identifies himself with his people. He is one with them in their sufferings and losses by death, as well as in their spiritual condition. Compare that touchingly tender style of address in chap. xxi. 10: " O thou my threshing and the corn of my floor." In the words " thy dew is as the dew of light," or rather " lights," for the word is plural in the Hebrew, the prophet, as already explained, is thinking of the revivifying effect of the dew, or rather night-mist, in Palestine; in which he sees the figure and promise of a resurrection. The countless drops of dew, sparkling on the blades of grass in the rays of the morning sun, speak to him of the multitudes who will then rise glorious to repopulate the deserted land. Thus taken, the words strongly remind us of Ps. cx. 3: " In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth " (thy youthful warriors), where the same beautiful figure is used to picture countless multitudes. The R.V. offers another and more prosaic translation: " Thy dew is as the dew of herbs." [3] This puzzles the English reader; but the simple explanation is that two different Hebrew words, signifying respectively " lights " and " herbs," are spelt in exactly the same way.

At first sight this confidently expressed hope of a resurrection, which coming from the lips of an inspired prophet, becomes a promise, seems strangely at variance with the words he has uttered only a few verses before: " The dead live not; the shades rise not." [4] The context, however, shows that the prophet is there speaking of entirely different persons, viz. of the departed tyrants who have held the Jews in subjection, who are now dead and gone and will never rise again to oppress the Chosen People.

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[1] R.V.M.

[2] *Nĕbhēlâthî* " my dead body," or " the part of me that has faded and fallen off me." (Cheyne.)

[3] See 2 Kings iv. 39, where the same word is used.

[4] R.V.M.

Before leaving this passage it may be well to point out that it would very much help the argument, if, with the R.V.M. and the majority of commentators, we could render the last clause of verse 18 "neither have inhabitants of the world been born"—a sense which the Hebrew verb very possibly admits[1]—and then take "inhabitants of the world" to mean the Jews, and the prophet to be lamenting their slow increase. The main objection to such a rendering is that "inhabitants of the world" is too large an expression to mean only the Jews. Also, in other passages where the same words occur in the original, the meaning is either all mankind, as in verse 9 of this chapter and in Ps. xxxiii. 8, or all exclusive of the Jews, as in Isa. xviii. 3 and Lam. iv. 12.

With regard to my affirmation that the Jews in the Isaianic period believed in a resurrection, I shall be told perhaps that such an idea is wholly at variance with the low subdued tones of Hezekiah's Song written on his recovery from his sickness.[2] My answer is that Hezekiah is speaking of life cut short, which the Jews regarded as a sign of Divine displeasure. Then, too, his gloomy words refer to the disembodied state: he is thinking only of the immediate future, and his lament is "they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth," *i.e.* they cannot hope to see Thy promises kept. The stricken king had strong reasons for wishing to live. Lastly, let it be added, that Hezekiah and Isaiah are two different personalities. But there is really no need to put this forward, for the Song contains no indication whatever that its writer did not believe in a resurrection.

We have now come to the close of our study of the Apocalypse of Isaiah. It presents us with a very touching picture of the prophet in his old age. His mind dwells much on the past: the scenes which he has witnessed, the crisis through which he has passed, the inspired warnings and threatenings he has uttered—all these rise up before him in quick succession, and are used by the Spirit as a vehicle for predicting greater things to come. As he passes to and fro, from the depth to the height, from storm to sunshine, he carries us along with him, so that we sympathise in his joys and sorrows, and are glad to think that he is now in the well-peopled land, one of that multitude that no man can number, beholding "the king in his beauty," standing before the throne of God and of the Lamb. In his Apocalypse Isaiah intermingles dirge and song. But *there*, as he himself testifies, there will be songs only: "songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." *There*, "the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces," so that "they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." In the sweet rhyming strains of Bernard de Morlaix, which chime in so happily with our closing thoughts over the great martyred prophet, whose heart was torn at the sight of his war-worn depopulated land,

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[1] Taken from animals dropping their young.

[2] Isa. xxxviii. 9–20.

"Nil ibi debile, nil ibi flebile, nil ibi scissum;
Res ibi publica *pax erit unica, pax in idipsum*,"

……

"*Liber et hostibus et dominantibus ibit Hebraeus;*
Liber habebitur, et celebrabitur hinc Jubilaeus.
Patria luminis, inscia turbinis, inscia litis,
Cive replebitur, amplificabitur Israelitis."

……

"Stant Syon atria conjubilantia, martyre plena,
Cive micantia, Principe stantia, luce serena."

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